

EDMONTON'S 100% INDEPENDENT NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

VUEWEEKLY

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mysterious skin

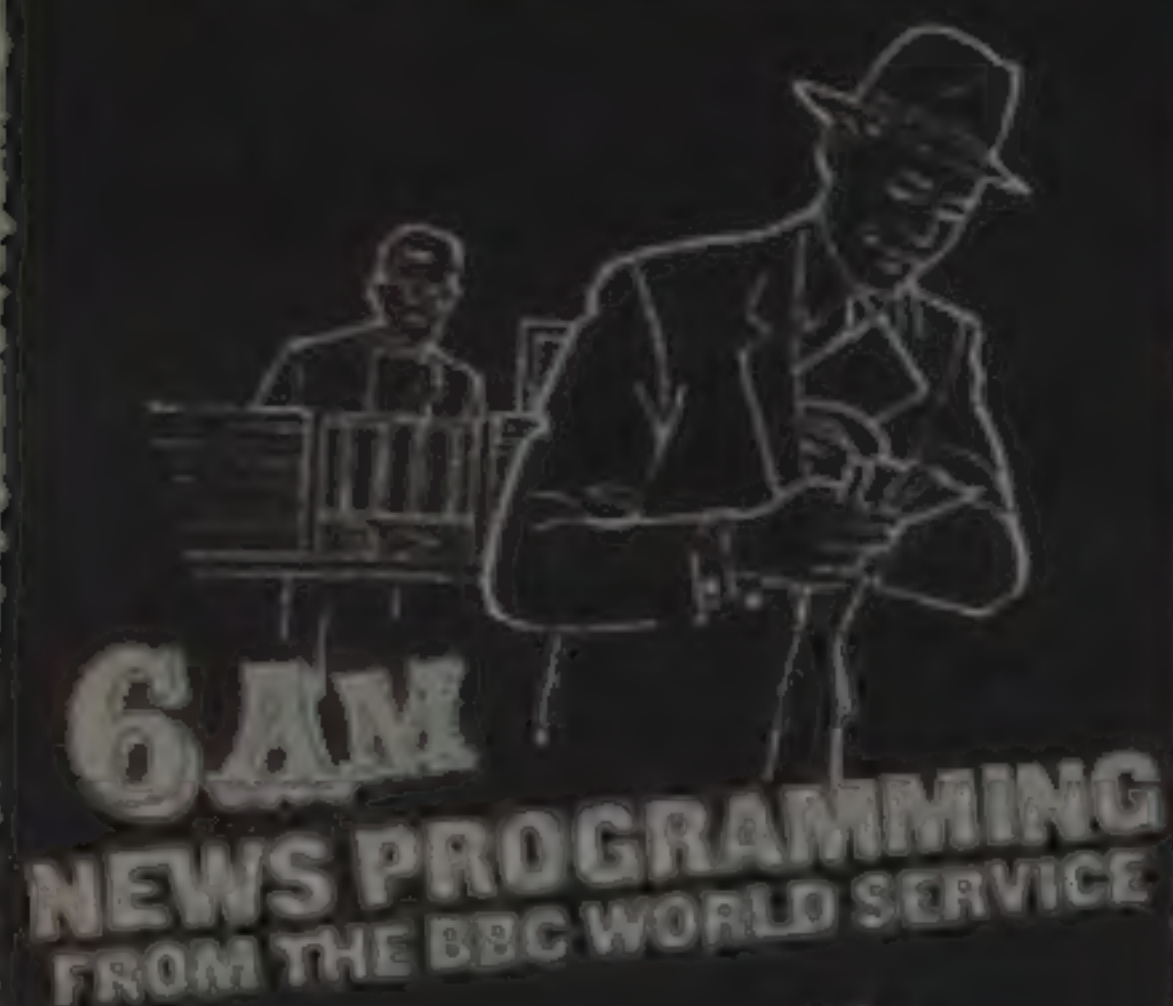
Bad-boy queer director
Gregg Araki sneaks into
the mainstream
[By PAUL MATWYCHUK] • 30

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*Fringe A*G*G**

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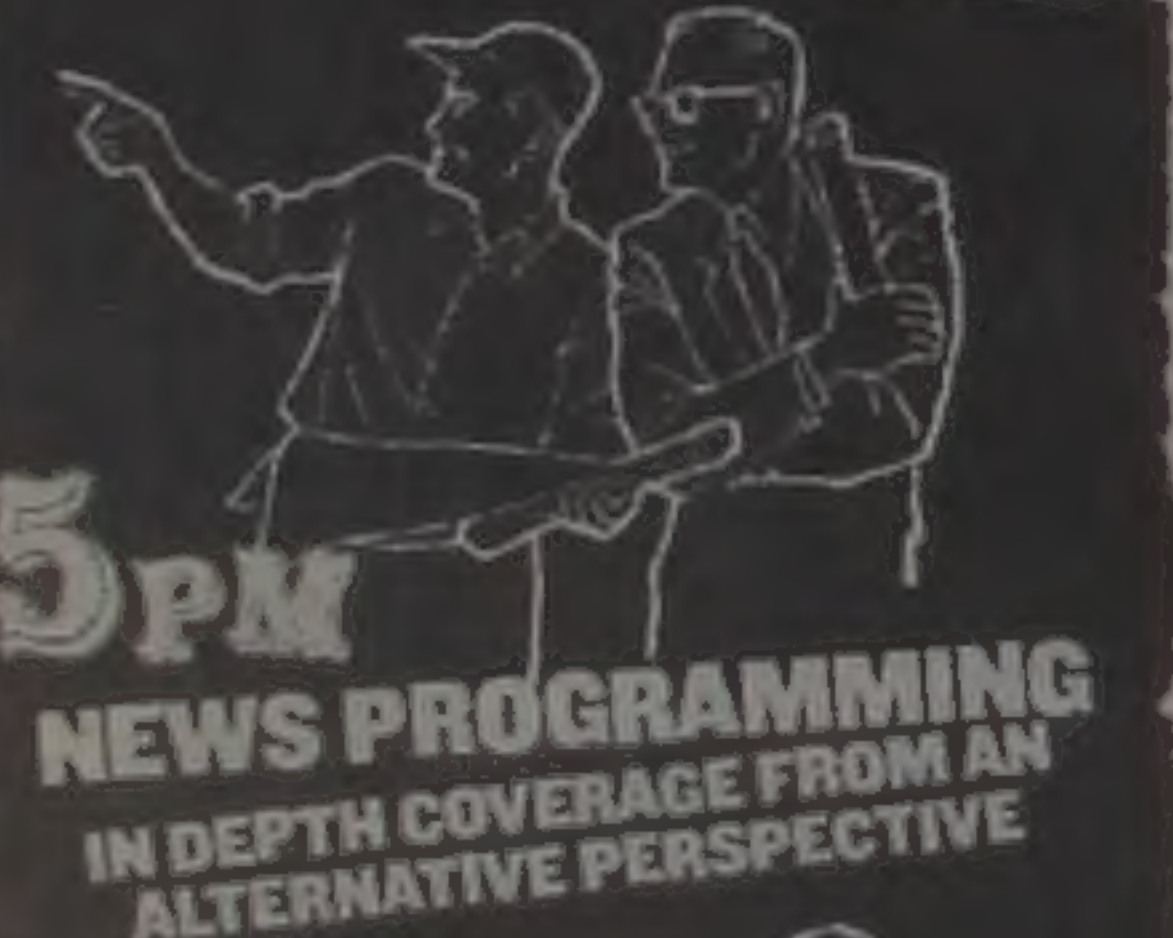
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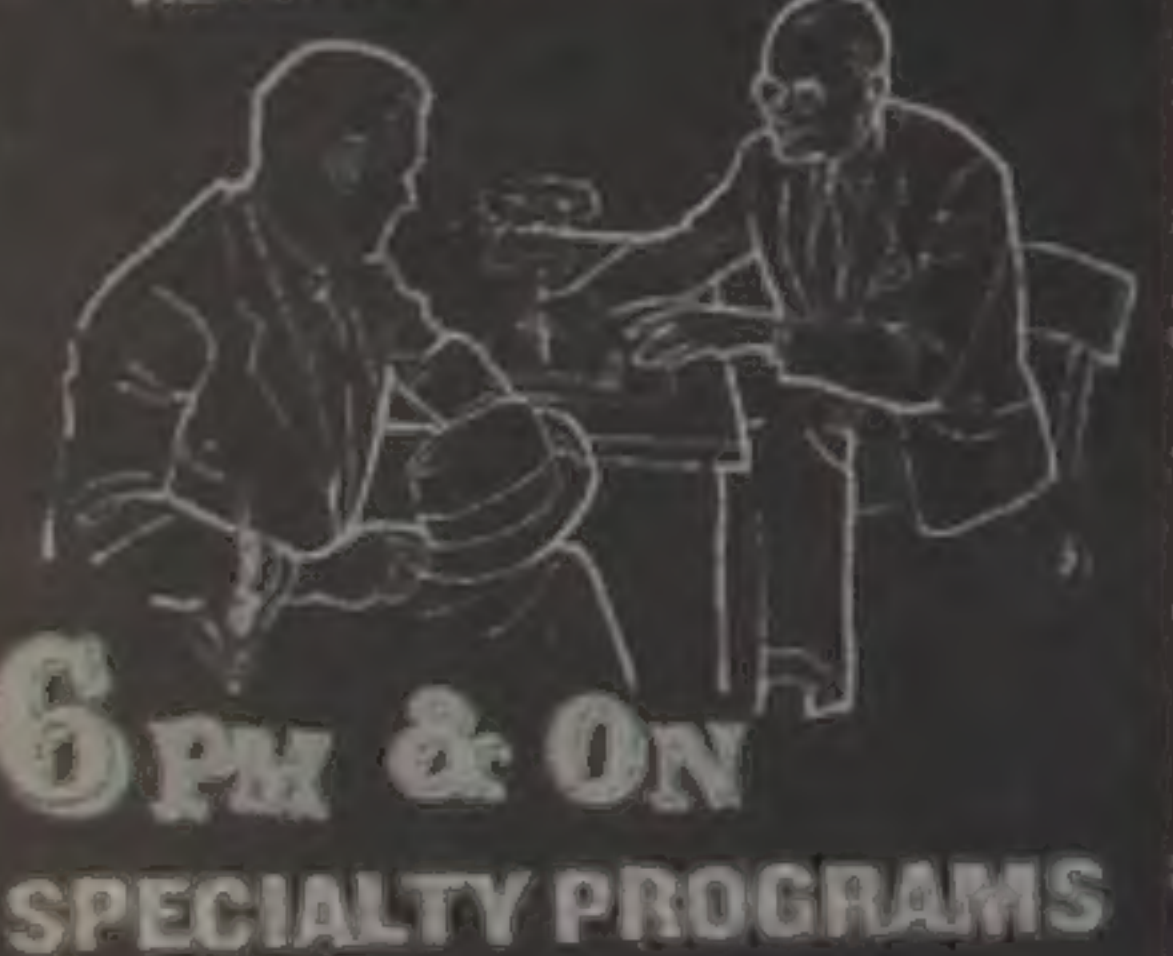
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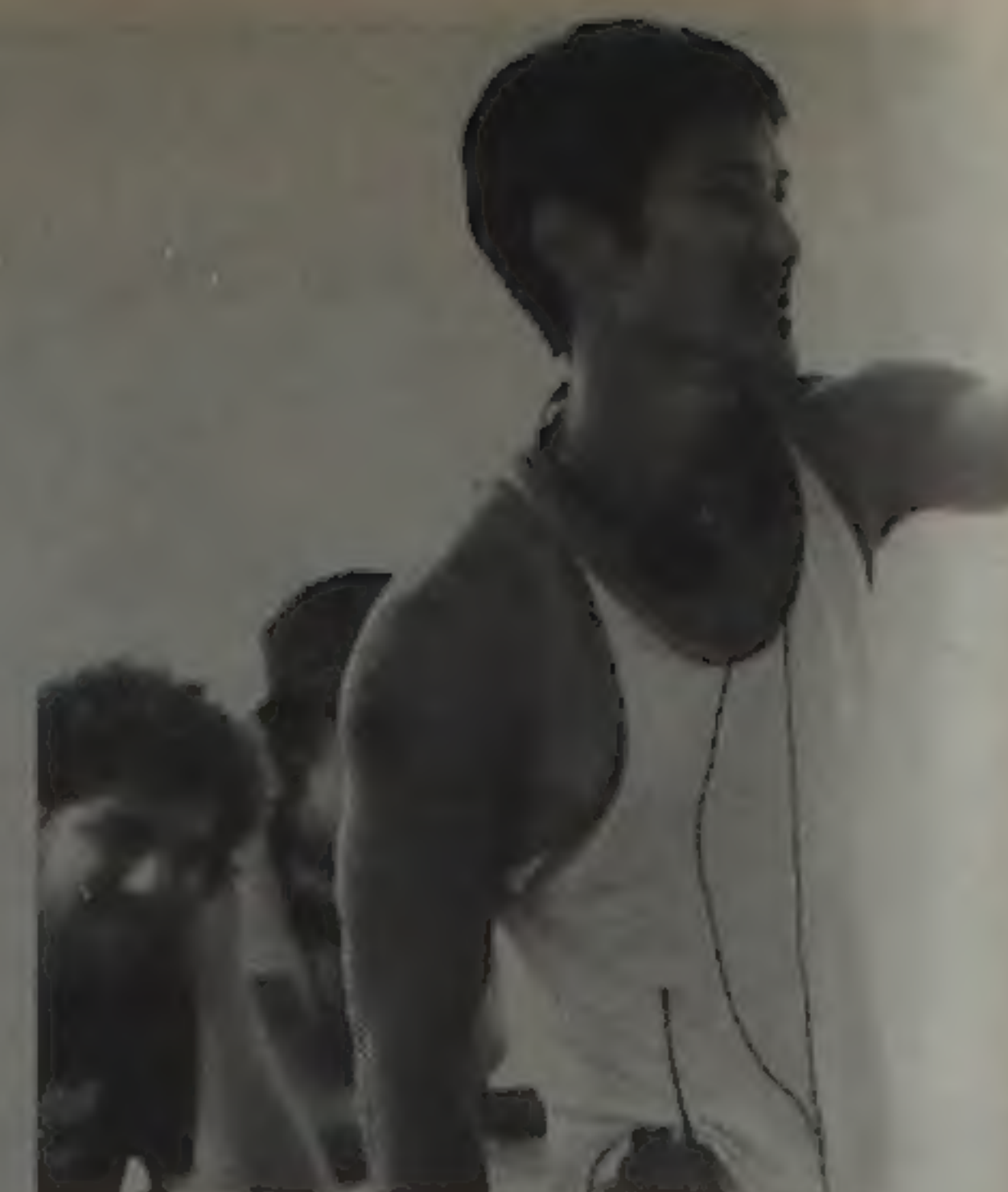
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ON THE COVER

Once considered one of the bad boys of the New Queer Cinema movement thanks to outrageously trashy and deliciously juvenile films like *The Doomed Generation* and *Totally F***ed Up*, Gregg Araki returns to the director's chair with what critics are calling his most accessible film yet, an adaptation of Scott Heim's 1995 novel, *Mysterious Skin*. But what's so accessible about a movie based on a book that deal extensively with the long-term emotional effects of childhood sex abuse, you ask? Paul Matwychuk talks with Araki and gets some answers • 30



FRONT

Kyoto: so is this thing actually doable or what? • 5



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Moka Only: if he stops working, he'll die • 21



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yourVUE

Western alienation real

Re: News Roundup, August 11-17, "West: disgruntled"—

The superficiality of your [Chris Boutet's] comments is a disservice to *Vue's* readers. I was particularly struck by your airy dismissal of the National Energy Policy (NEP) as a "more than 30-year-old issue" that was "pretty shitty, probably."

"Probably"? Perhaps you are two young to remember, but I can assure you that the NEP caused a lot of ordinary Edmontonians and Albertans, just like your readers, to lose their jobs and have trouble feeding their families. Property values collapsed and many businesses closed or left the province. It was neither funny nor trivial, and it came as a shock to us that the rest of the country could do that to Albertans so easily and unsympathetically. Yes, it could and did happen here, and yes it could happen again.

And why do you think the Senate issue is so unimportant? Wouldn't you object to a third-world country being governed by an unelected body? If so, why should Canadians have to put up with such a patently undemocratic structure?

Finally, you observe that separatist sentiment has not resulted in even one seat being won by a separatist candidate. But you seem to forget your paper's frequent editorializing in favour of a proportional vote electoral system, on the very ground that the existing "first past the post" system prevents significant minority interests from receiving proportional representation. Don't you think that the same effect might be occurring for this issue?

I'm a Canadian and I love my country. But Western alienation is real and has real causes. Please think a little more deeply before belittling it. —RONALD J. LITEPLO, EDMONTON, AB

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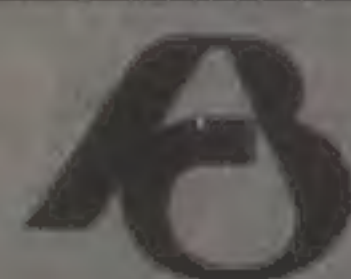
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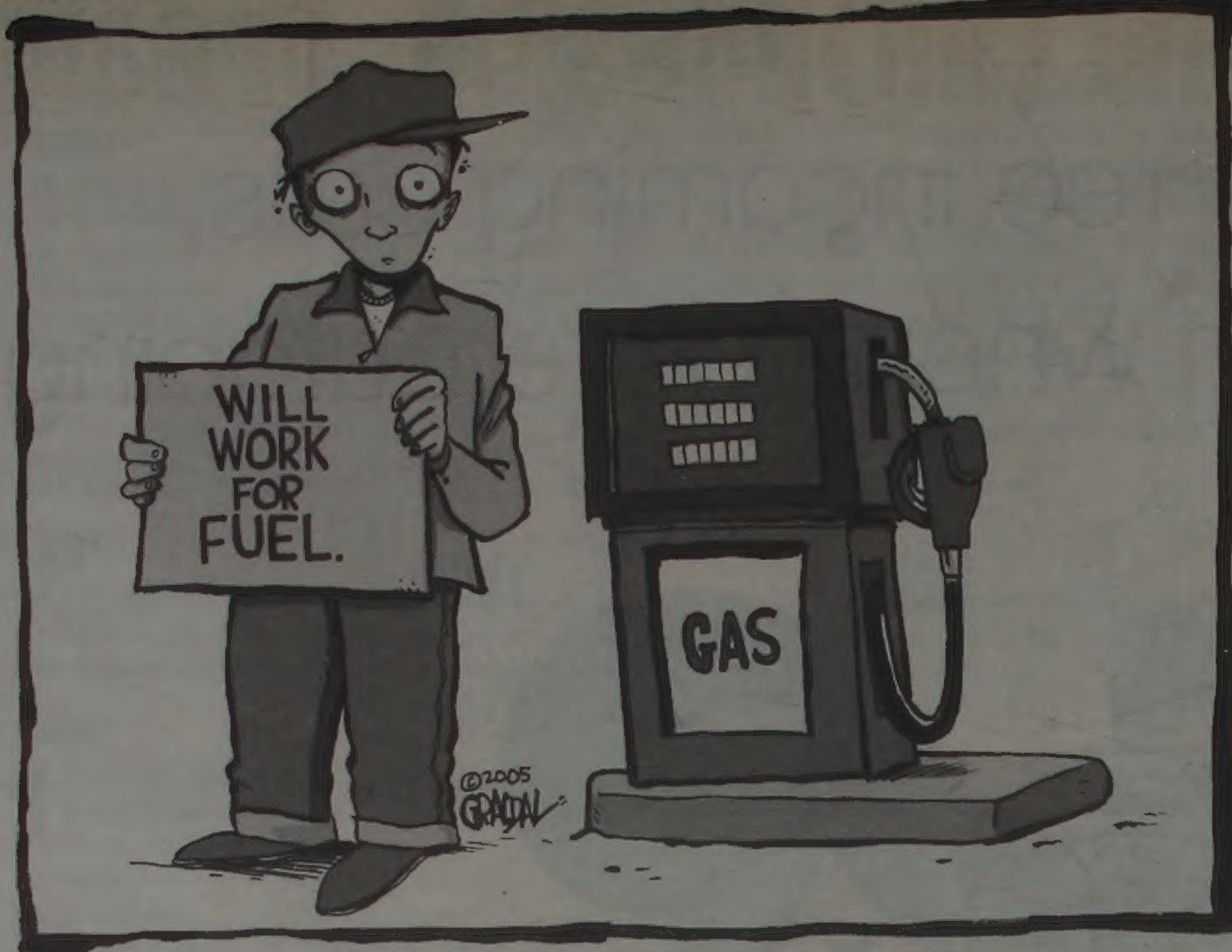
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news roundup

BY CHRIS BOUTET

WARSHIPS: SCRAMBLED!

Man, I don't know what's more surprising: that Canadian warships were ordered to set course for the Arctic earlier this week to establish our claim over the frozen wastelands therein, or the fact that Canada actually has, like, warships. Huh.

Anyhow, according to a story run in the Monday edition of London's Daily Telegraph, Ottawa has apparently decided that gunboat diplomacy is the way to go on this whole "who controls the Arctic" thing, and as such has launched a series of sovereignty patrols to assert our territorial claims and fend off rivals Denmark, Norway, Russia and the States.

Thanks to the grim spectre of global warming threatening to melt the polar ice caps and potentially exposing untapped mineral and oil deposits, as well as opening up an Arctic shipping lane linking the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, control over Canada's north has become a really big deal of late, recently causing federal defense minister Bill Graham to lay claim on the disputed Hans Island off the coast of Greenland, much to the chagrin of Denmark, who say ownership of the tiny frozen rock was never officially settled between the two countries. Canada also finds itself at odds with the United States over ownership of the Northwest passage and resource-rich Beaufort Sea, and is mired in disputes with Russia regarding overlapping claims on parts of the Arctic continental shelf.

"This is a demonstration of Canada's will to exercise sovereignty over our own backyard," Commodore Bob Blakely of the Royal Canadian Navy told the Telegraph. "The sea is a highway that is open to everyone. We will allow everybody passage as long as they ask for out consent and comply with our rules: 'use our resources wisely and don't pollute the fragile northern ecosystem.'"

And please—don't make fun of our seacraft.

PRIVACY: WHATEV!

In a move that no doubt caused more than a few personal freedom and privacy advocates to spend their weekend racked with fits of incredulous sputtering, federal Justice Minister Irwin Cotler announced on Friday that legislation will be introduced this fall which will give police and national security agencies authority to eavesdrop on cell-phone calls and monitor the Internet activities on Canadians.

According to a report from the Canadian Press, the news came after a speech to an Ottawa police association, with Cotler confirming that his government will soon bring "lawful access" legislation to cabinet for final approval before running it by the House of Commons. The bill would allow police to demand internet service providers hand over any and all information about the surfing habits of targeted individuals—powers which Cotler says are needed to replace outdated surveillance laws written before the advent of such crazy future technologies like mobile phones and e-mail.

"We will put law-enforcement people on the same level playing field as criminals and terrorists in the matter of using technology and accessing technology," Cotler told the CP. "At the same time we will protect the civil libertarian concerns that are involved such as privacy and information surveillance."

Police groups maintain that they're not asking for new powers, but rather simply the ability to continue the same

investigative activities in this age of digital things. But this does little to ease the concerns of critics involved in the private consultations with the government who feel that the legislation goes too far, and could ultimately be used to nab Canadians engaging in "relatively minor" illegal offences such as downloading music, movies and software.

Really? Those are the critics primary concerns, huh? Not, like, the loss of personal privacy in general? Alright, I guess.

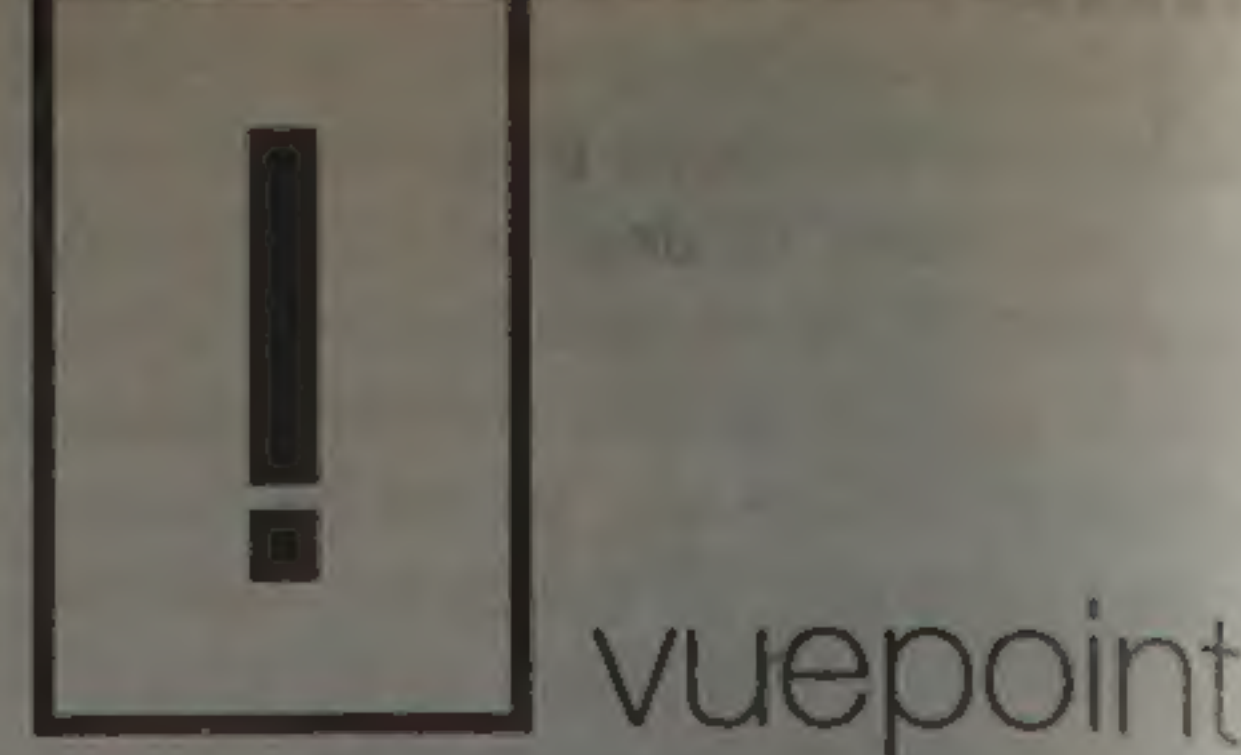
PAT ROBERTSON: CRAZY!

Well, if there was anyone among us who had somehow managed to forget that the religious right in the States are completely insane, Pat Robertson, former presidential candidate and leader of the two-million-strong Christian Coalition of America, was more than happy to remind them Monday by publicly suggesting that American agents assassinate Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to stop his country from becoming "a launching pad for communist infiltration and Muslim extremism." (Yeah, haven't you heard? Communism is totally still a threat. Get with it, pinkos.)

"We have the ability to take him out, and I think the time has come that we exercise that ability," said Robertson of the outspoken Bush opponent during a Monday television broadcast of Christian talk show *The 700 Club*. "We don't need another \$200 billion war to get rid of one, you know, strong-arm dictator. It's a whole lot cheaper than fighting a war, and I don't think any oil shipments will stop."

You know, I don't think Jesus could have put it any better himself. Still, as chilling as it is, it's far from the best crazy statement that Robertson's ever made on behalf of God; that honour still belongs to his criticism of feminism, which he once said encourages women to "kill their children, practice witchcraft and become lesbians."

Oh, America. ☹



vuepoint

BY ROSS MOROZ

Contract killers

Anyone who has recently tuned into Canada's national public broadcaster has probably been more than a little disappointed. On August 15, after 15 months of negotiation, the CBC took the "regrettable but necessary step" of locking out employees belonging to the Canadian Media Guild, which represents 5308 CBC technicians, personalities and producers. Since then, the CBC has been broadcasting mostly reruns and no news whatsoever.

The main sticking point is management's wish to hire more contractual workers. According to the corporation's website, "CBC has proposed to expand its ability to choose whether to hire some future employees [as] either contract or permanent." The lockout was necessary, the corporation argues, because the union "does not want to resume negotiations so long as the Corporation continues to seek the flexibility to engage future employees in certain classifications as contractual." Until the corporation is allowed this "flexibility," the lockout will continue, meaning everyone from Peter Mansbridge to local personalities like morning radio host Ron Wilson will remain out on the streets.

"To me, the idea that we're going to have to Wal-Mart-ize the CBC is offensive," says Wilson, who has been picketing outside of the CBC's downtown Edmonton studio. Wilson dismisses the corporation's claim that less than five per cent of its workforce is employed under a contract basis as "absolute nonsense." "In the newsroom at CBC Edmonton 40 per cent of the workforce is either contracted, casual, or temporary," he explains, and the CMG insists that roughly a third of CBC employees nationwide are working on a contractual basis.

In reality, though, the real basis of the disagreement is moot, at least as far as the general public is concerned. Regardless of who wins this labour war, CBC management has already lost the battle for public sympathy. Even the most rabid supporters of the CBC have no affinity for the corporation as an abstract concept; their affection lies with the very people the corporation is now trying to demonize as unreasonable. Canadians love *Hockey Night in Canada*, but it's just a vessel for the currently locked-out Don Cherry and Ron MacLean. Canadian taxpayers—who, by the way, provide the CBC with \$900 million a year in funding—have been told to comment by calling the CBC's audience relations line (which went unanswered this week), or to email (to a full mailbox). Kind of makes you wonder just how "public" public broadcasting is at the CBC these days. ☹

Depending on who you talk to, Canada's involvement in the Kyoto Protocol is going to save our economy or destroy it; it's going to make us an essential player in the battle against global warming or it's going to embarrass us on the international stage; it's going to make our country a better place to live or it's going to fall apart around us.

Forget same-sex marriage and the sponsorship scandal: Kyoto is the real controversy facing our country's policymakers right now, and with only two and a half years to go until the deadline to begin meeting the protocol's emissions standards is upon us, it's safe to say we'll be hearing even more conflicting opinions on it in the months to come. Even now, the debate around Kyoto is heating up again thanks to the continual reiterations of federal Conservative leader Stephen Harper during his summer barbeque tour that, if the Conservatives were to be elected into power, they would scrap the accord entirely and introduce their own, cheaper, more "achievable" targets.

While it seems like Kyoto has already been in the news for ages, however, the protocol only came into force this February, three months after its ratification by Russia. Despite the fact that the protocol was negotiated back in 1997, it was necessary for two conditions to be met before it could come into effect. First, 55 countries had to sign on to the treaty—this was fulfilled with Iceland's ratification in 2002—and secondly, the industrialized (also known as Annex I) signatories had to have been producing a minimum of 55 per cent of all carbon dioxide emissions from Annex I countries back in 1990. To date, every industrialized nation in the world except for Monaco, Australia, and the United States has signed the agreement.

Complicated, yes—but it's more important to understand where we go from here now that Kyoto is officially in force. The overall goal of the accord is for the world's industrialized countries to reduce their collective greenhouse gas emissions to 5.2 per cent below 1990 levels. Emissions will be calculated as an average over the five-year period from 2008–12. However, if signatories feel they will not be able to reach this target in the time allotted, they also have the option of "emissions trading." This means that countries that reduce their emissions below target can sell the credit they receive to countries that are going to have a harder time meeting their targets. Nations can also receive credit for carbon dioxide "sinks"—for example, forests that remove large amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere—and for sharing their clean energy programs abroad.

With all this information, it might sound like Canada will have no problem reaching its targeted emissions levels. We're a country that prides itself on its natural beauty, after all, and most Canadians consider themselves environmentally friendly. However, according to Harper's recent statements, the outcome of the accord is simply going to be a lot of money spent overseas on emissions credits with very little

The (im)possible dream



Graham Johnson

The debate rages on as to whether meeting the Kyoto Accord's standards—if Canada even can—will lead to financial ruin or economic prosperity

By KRISTINE OWRAM

to show in the way of actual environmental benefits at home.

FOR JAMES RAJOTTE, MP for Edmonton-Leduc and Conservative industry critic, it will be impossible for the Conservatives to believe the Liberals will reach Kyoto emissions targets until they see a concrete plan explaining how that's going to happen.

"I guess our biggest concern with the new plan on implementing Kyoto that was introduced in May is that it comes nowhere near meeting the targets that they've agreed to," says Rajotte. "So I guess the big question is where is the plan that's actually going to fulfill the commitment that they made? I mean, we in our party have said that we don't think we can meet those levels without seriously damaging our economy, and the Liberals have said that's not true, but they've never actually produced a plan which comes anywhere near close to the level of megatonne emissions necessary to actually achieve those targets. From what I've seen it's been pretty much all talk and very little action so far."

But according to federal Environment Minister Stéphane Dion, the targets set out by Kyoto are absolutely achievable, and achieving them is absolutely necessary. He explains that,

as part of Environment Canada's new Project Green, a 55-page report entitled *Moving Forward on Climate Change: A Plan for Honouring our Kyoto Commitment* was recently released, outlining several key components of the government's plan, including a Climate Fund that will operate on much the same principles as emissions trading, allowing small entities like municipalities and companies to receive credit for surplus emissions reductions; the Large Final Emitter System, which sets specific emission standards for the 700 biggest emitters

ENVIRONMENT

in Canada; the Partnership Fund, which is an investment of \$2-3 billion in helping the provinces and territories speed up their greenhouse gas reductions; investment in renewable energy sources and carbon sinks; tax incentives; and, finally, a policy to "green" the Government of Canada's own operations.

Says Rajotte, one of Kyoto critics' biggest fears is that the protocol will seriously hurt Canada's economy; one number that comes up again and again is that it could cost 450,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector alone. However, according to

Dion, not meeting Kyoto's emissions standards is what will really hurt our economy in the long run.

"To the contrary, we need to consider what would happen if we were not to follow through on our plan, in terms of having old technologies, old infrastructures, pollution, and so on," explains Dion. "We need to do it because we are in a new industrial revolution—the one of the sustainable economy—and Canada must be a champion of it as we have been champions of all the former industrial revolutions. Kyoto is the incentive to do the right thing and to do it now, rather than wait for tomorrow."

THERE CAN BE other economic advantages to Kyoto as well, says Dave Martin, energy campaigner for Greenpeace Canada. "I don't think there's any economic downside to Kyoto. If Canada starts to take advantage of the development of alternative technology industries such as the wind industry and solar technology, we can start to get into that economic and industrial niche that European companies have started to dominate," he explains. "It represents an opportunity. It's not just a cost or a drain; it's an opportunity for Canada to develop a new and more innova-

tive industrial strategy than just forever being a hewer of wood and a drawer of water and, in this case, a pumper of oil and natural gas."

But according to Jeremy Brown, policy analyst with the Centre for Studies in Risk and Environment at the Fraser Institute, the theory that Canada will be able to save its economy from the ravages of Kyoto simply by investing in alternative energy sources is a fallacy. "Canada is the most energy-intensive economy in the world—we use more energy per dollar of GDP than any other country in the world. Way more. It's because oil, gas, coal, forestry, transportation, those are all very energy-intensive industries. It sounds odd because most of those are also energy industries, but it takes a lot of energy to produce energy," says Brown. "So if we skew our energy costs, we can really change our competitiveness globally, especially if your major trading partner isn't doing the same thing. If the cost of energy in Canada goes up, suddenly places like China and India and other developing nations that aren't involved in Kyoto will become much more attractive because their production costs are just that much lower. So that's where we get into losing those 450,000 jobs."

Opinions on the economic impact Kyoto will have, and even whether or not the targets laid out by the protocol are achievable, differ so greatly that it seems as though we won't really know what our country will look like until the deadline actually arrives. However, it will be possible for all the players to further debate the successes and failures of Kyoto long before then, as the first-ever Parties to the Kyoto Protocol conference will be hosted in Montréal this November. Still, as the largest conference ever to be hosted on Canadian soil and the first meeting of Kyoto's signatories since the accord came into effect, it is unclear how it will play out, and hopes as to its outcome differ as greatly as opinions on the protocol itself.

"Frankly, I think the biggest problem with Kyoto is that it presented itself as a panacea. It's seen as the be-all and end-all; if you like the environment, you're pro-Kyoto and that's it," says Rajotte. "But there are a whole number of things that need to be done beyond Kyoto, as it doesn't address what we would consider some of the more harmful emissions or issues of clean water or soil at all. If we were the government of Canada, we would like to take the lead in saying, 'Okay, none of us are meeting these targets right now, so let's take another look at it, and this time, let's look at it as a total, holistic environmental package.'"

On the other hand, Dion sees the Montréal conference not as an opportunity to learn from the failures of Kyoto, but to learn from its successes. "I'm hoping to create a *rapprochement*, a capacity for these countries to be closer in their views than they were a year ago," he says. "I want us to give the world a signal that what we have built in the last years within Kyoto and outside Kyoto, we will pull it together, we will take the best practices from it, and we will give the world a better regime in the years to come." ☐

ROB THE
SANGRIFLOWER

OVER
HERE!

MY GOD—THAT
LOOK OF TERROR
ETCHED INTO
HIS FACE!

IT'S ALMOST AS
IF HE WAS...
SCARED TO
DEATH!

TERRORDACTYLS

I SUSPECT THE INVOLVEMENT
OF TERRORDACTYLS...

DID YOU GUYS
DO THIS?

NO!

WHAT A THING
TO SAY!

THOUGH WE WERE DOING A LITTLE
TERROR-SCREAMING EARLIER...

MAYBE A
LITTLE...

YOU HAVE TO PRACTICE
REGULARLY, YOU KNOW,
OR YOU LOSE IT.

AND SOME
PEOPLE HAVE
WEAK HEARTS.

TERRIBLY
WEAK HEARTS.

dispatch

08/22/05, Strathcona Hotel

"Where's my wife and family? What if I die here?" —PAUL SIMON

Monday night at the Strathcona, temperature dropping outside and the place is empty—the crowds out there in the floodlights and vendor-glow of the Fringe Compound aren't like gas molecules; they're not Brownian Moving their way into this low-pressure area. Well, most of them aren't—a screech from the direction of the north entrance calls our attention to the arrival of a pussy posse of slumming glittertrash:

"What did you say, bitch?!" It's the unmistakable ear-pierce of the affronted Young Woman of Today; not even three steps in the door and a girl acting on behalf of the punkrock pool party in back had already cracked wise over the sequined tops and shimmering handbag trim making the scene. And the scene escalates, people are rising from their chairs, the duly deputized representatives of barroom order show up... and the slummers get bounced right back out into the night.

"Are we seriously getting kicked out of the Strat?!"

Believe it, sugarpop; lines are being drawn all over this neighbourhood, and even the most arbitrary of boundaries'll turn your average human animal into a territorial beast. Check out how the Fringe Fortress got fenced off like a fucking refugee camp, eh? This side/that side is a sign of the times, and some hoody-wearing rockin' girls decided a line needed to be drawn right at the doorway to this ancient tavern, the ol' Maginot of snobs-versus-slobs. Sorry your buzz had to be killed for the sake of homeland security.

That grass is always greener, isn't it? I'm feeling it now... talk about

demarcation lines, it's like there's an invisible forcefield in here keeping the bustle and bubble of the back from spilling into the dead n' empty Old Man Bar where we sit, staring hopelessly into that promised land of pretty young things and draining draught as if it's not going to give us the shits. A freelance photographer who's paying for his drinks out of a Ziploc of loose change he scavenged from his dying grandmother's house, a legacy rocker who'd be looping down some deep dub all over town if only drummers would return his phonecalls, and... me. Look out, ladies!

Jesus, is this how it's gonna be? Is this it? I just came up from a weekend down in southern Alberta with my mom, my dad, my cop brother, his beautiful bride and their new baby... two middle-class mainstream married couples and myself. After a disastrous stab at having an actual discussion—ever try to engage in the old give-and-take with a police officer who *knows* he's correct?—I just kept quiet, ran the clock out with reading while babyshit and shopping and the weather and

Jesus, is this how it's gonna be? Is this it?

real-estate prices mingled with the gabble of the ever-present television. And damn me for a hypocrite, but I was *jealous*.

Not jealous of the giant mom-mobile or the faux-wholesome Pier One decor or any of the *things*... jealous of *home*. Jealousy's a terrible enough emotion when you just unconsciously go with it, but when you stop and reflect and look into the heart of it, when you see that sick system of doubt and regret and shame and fear and embarrassment that keeps the green slime flowing. And jammed in there like shrapnel, jagged chunks of every sweet chance I blew to fucking pieces.

It's cold, and I'm drunk, and this place stinks like someone ate a urinal cake, shit it out, then ate that shit and threw up. I don't want a home to go to; I want a home I *never* wanted to leave. —DARREN ZENKO

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Take a stand

Local youth group raises awareness for legal rights with Stand 2005

By DAVID BERRY

When your name has been splashed across front pages for all the wrong reasons not once, but twice, you'd think the last thing you'd want to do is step back into the public glare. But for Ronald Dalton, the Newfoundland man who was wrongfully convicted for the death of his wife in 1989 before being exonerated in 2000 after eight years in prison and several more mired in the appeal system, the chance to prevent a situation like his is more than enough to pull him away from a quiet life in his Newfoundland home.

"To me, the real inspiration for responding to these [speaking engagement] requests is Stephen Prescott," explains Dalton. "As most people know by now, he was sentenced to hang when he was 14 years old, and he always says that as much as he doesn't care for the lime-light, he doesn't think he has the option not to, particularly when he has the opportunity to speak to young people."

"Against that type of a backdrop, when you've gone through something like we have, I find it difficult not to respond to the opportunity to speak to a group," he adds. "If you may reach one or two people someplace, and help them to avoid that type of situation, it's not something you can measure."

Dalton is coming to Edmonton to speak as part of **Stand 2005**, a program organized by the Youth Restorative Action Project (YRAP) to raise awareness of youth rights, and particularly legal rights. YRAP was founded in 2003 to help young

offenders who have committed crimes because of significant social issues, particularly at-risk youth, seeking to educate and rehabilitate youth who might otherwise get lost in the justice system; run entirely by youth volunteers, it is also the only program of its kind in the world.

STAND 2005 is a three-part program, culminating with an eight-hour live radio broadcast on CJSR this Sunday from 12:30 to 8:30 p.m., which, in addition to speakers such as Dalton, Edmonton City Councilor Kim Krushell and Liberal Justice Critic Bruce Miller, will feature performances by local acts like Politic Live and Eshod Ibn Wyza. As Aaida Rajabali, an 18-year-old YRAP volunteer who is serving as one of three program coordinators for Stand 2005, explains, though the other

parts of Stand 2005—including youth rights workshops that have taken place around the city and an interactive CD that mixes songs by local bands with interludes discussing youth rights—were targeted at educating youth, YRAP is hoping the radio broadcast can get the message to a wider audience.

"When we meet with the youths and the victims and discuss it with them, we've noticed that there is a large ignorance of youth rights, among both youth and adults," Rajabali explains. "They've been taken advantage in many, many different systems: school, the justice system, healthcare, almost anything you can think about. Though the other parts will hopefully educate youth, we hope the concert itself will target the larger community to be aware of this problem."

For Dalton, associations like YRAP and events like Stand 2005 are an essential tool for preventing situations like his, as they focus on creating awareness of legal issues among the population, something he thinks happens too little in the country. As he explains, the only way to fix anything is to realize that there is a problem.

don't like to encourage mistakes, but we almost have to develop a culture that allows for mistakes.

"Any police officer in any police service in the country is not out to make too many mistakes on his road to promotion, but if they're rewarded for acknowledging mistakes when they are made, and correcting them

"You don't like to encourage mistakes, but we almost have to develop a culture that allows for mistakes."

—RONALD DALTON

"The more we speak about it, the more likely we are to—well, not avoid [mistakes] entirely, since I don't think that's possible, but at least acknowledge that mistakes are made, and work on a system for correcting them," he explained. "You

as soon as they can, those are the type of people we want out there." ☉

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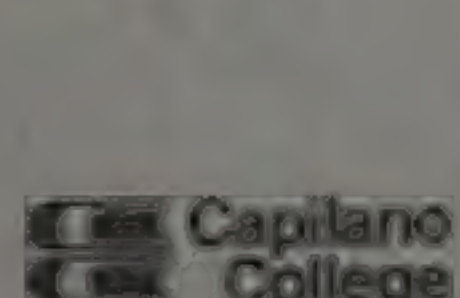
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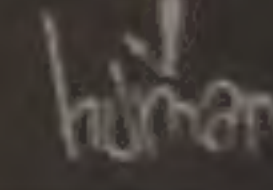
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BY CHRISTOPHER WIEBE

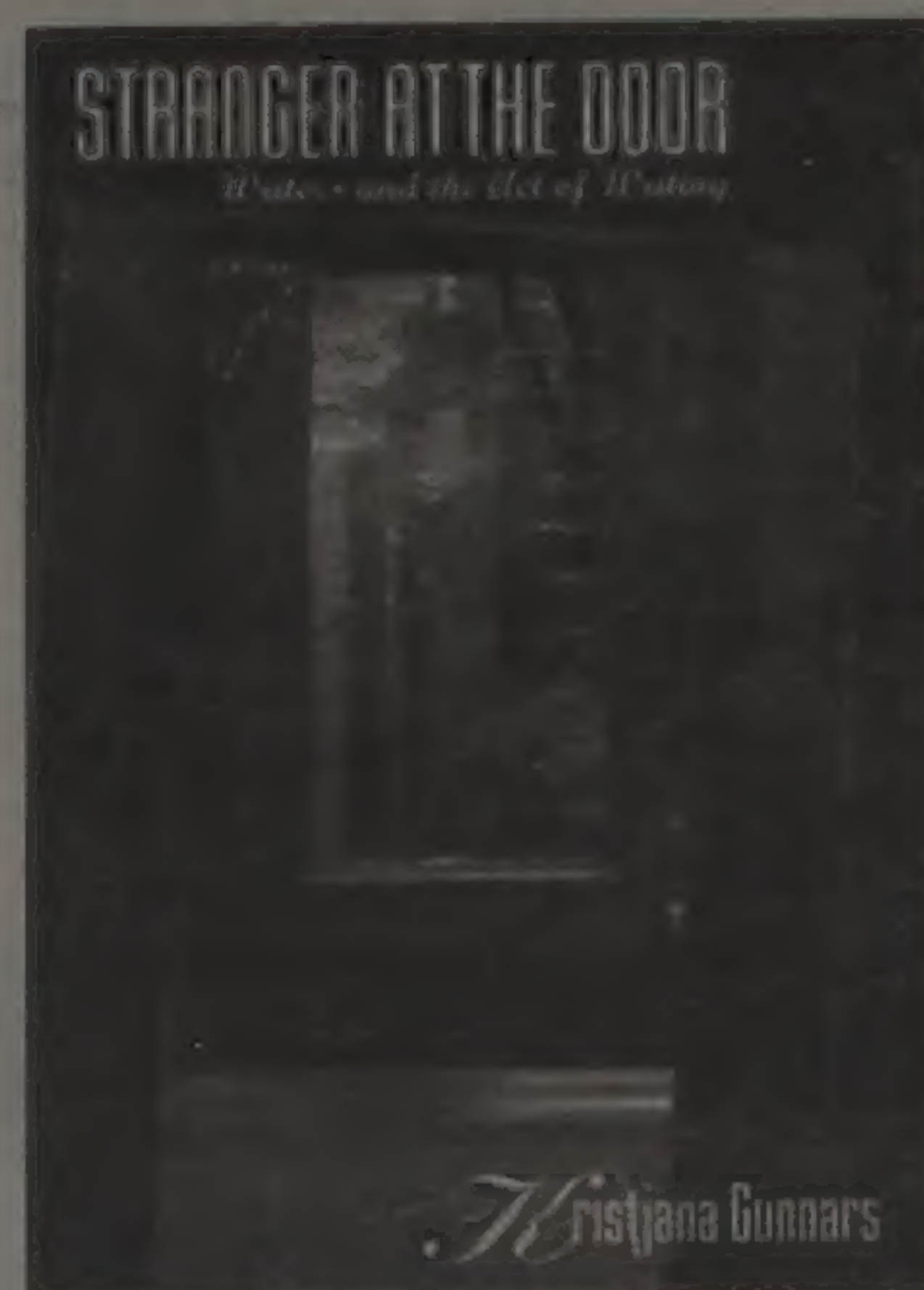
Gunnars ready!

The seashore, I've always thought, is a nice place to visit, but I'd never want to live there. Perhaps it's my prairie habituation to land running to every horizon, but I've never liked the feeling of being at the outward limits of things, at an extremity, of having only one way out. And the sea itself, after I've thrilled at the salty air flung up by the waves, the clams and the gulls, begins to feel so implacable and heartless that it fills me with dread.

Kristjana Gunnars has long divided her time between Sechart, on B.C.'s Sunshine Coast, and Edmonton, where she taught creative writing at the University of Alberta until retiring in 2003. Her second collection of short fiction, *Any Day But This* (Red Deer Press) explores the lives of people living north of Vancouver, a ferry ride across Horseshoe Bay. And true to its geography, the collection is full of people backed into corners by circumstance or looking to escape their past. But the sea, it seems, won't let them forget. In story after story, a view of the ocean or the enforced idleness of the ferry journey across Horseshoe Bay draws characters into an eddy of self-

reflection, in which past and present slip into one another and confession leads to disturbing self-knowledge.

Many of the stories deal with loneliness. In "What is Had and Had Not," a middle-aged woman, cast aside by her brutishly practical husband, travels to a cabin on the coast, only to be haunted by the darkness she encountered in a Crows Nest Pass coal mine decades before. Other stories revolve around people whose lives have been undone by sickness. A job-like man whose wife (suffering from Alzheimer's) wanders away from her care home is left with his anger



at God and the question of whether she died in the woods by her own choice. "The Road Between Wind and Water" is an extraordinary examination of the tensions between a tough-talking "working class" mother, the daughter she has mistakenly considered feeble-minded, and a grandmother dying of cancer.

In a recent interview, Calgary improv-theatre guru Keith Johnstone made a pithy statement that has stuck with me. He said the heart of storytelling (on stage or page) is about showing people being altered, and that so much of contemporary story is mere static description devoid of development. The stories in *Any Day But This* go straight to the junctures, the crossroads. "The weird thing, Martha now thought when she considered it all, was that such a fateful moment is cataclysmic for only you. No one else experiences that same catastrophe. It's yours alone. Inside everyone's life is a network of roads and highways—some large and wide and some small and crooked, some just alleys winding along, some regular streets in straight blocks with corners—but these are the paths which the various themes of your life are traveling. It's a web. A spider web, she was thinking, and you are at the center of it." Gunnars, through her exceptional powers of storytelling, uses the truthfulness of fiction to reveal the underlying texture of human experience, rather than merely reproducing its surfaces.

OUTWARDLY, these stories diverge stylistically from Gunnars' four previous novels. These works were often fragmented and full of silences and references to literary theory. In this new collection there is the same steady control of each sentence's rhythm, the same quiet thoughtfulness as each story unfolds its rich psychological detail, but the stories are more linear and traditional in form. Even so, these are not stories that lull a reader into a dream-like passivity. Gunnars continues to explore the constructedness of fiction through less overt means, such as the overlap between autobiography and fiction.

This brings me to another new publication by Gunnars, a collection of eight essays called *Stranger at the Door: Writers and the Act of Writing* (Wilfred Laurier University Press). In it, she tries to get at the quasi-mystical act that is writing and find the place from which good writing springs: is it necessarily grounded in "the good life," as Annie Dillard suggests, or the simplicity of a Thomas Merton? Gunnars delves into such things as the importance of "home" for the writer and interaction between theory and fiction. She looks at the ritual and spiritual dimensions of the writing process: "Writing, like birdwatching, involves patience and silence."

The essays in the collection feed off and luxuriate in the words of other writers, quoting them extensively. This is a theoretical strategy. Gunnars troubles the reader's fetish of "originality," quoting Robert Kroetsch who wrote, "the chances of being original are less than slim. They don't exist." Whether it's acknowledged or not, all new writing is an assemblage of old writing. To write, then, is to enter into the paradox of both possessing and being possessed by the past. "If a text is an apprenticeship to other texts," writes Gunnars, "it would be natural for it to reflect its influences, to make them transparent and to show a certain self-consciousness about its own genesis and process. In doing so, the writer can acknowledge a debt that is owing. Such acknowledgements could move us closer to 'honest' writing, if the mechanisms involved are shown for what they are." All told, *Stranger at the Door* offers a diverse and exciting vantage on the elusive nature of writing. ☐

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By RICHARD BURNETT

Cock-a-dildo-do

I've never been topped by famed Colt Studios porn star Dave Angelo, but I once pleased myself with an eight-inch dildo—with its two-inch girth and six-inch circumference—moulded on his famous cock, right down to the last vein.

So imagine my surprise when I found myself blabbing with Angelo himself over the phone from his Montreal home last week as he was prepping for the September 2 world premiere of the new Showcase TV series *WEBDREAMS*. The series follows the lives of a group of Montreal men and women who work in the online adult entertainment industry. Says Angelo, "I think the series will allow viewers to see what the porn business is all about, which is regular people who have simply chosen a different job."

So many Montrealers have chosen porn as their vocation that the city is now one of the largest porn production centres in the world. As drag icon RuPaul told me earlier this summer, "Montreal to Americans is Sex City. It's such a sensual place."

"That's because of Montreal's sin-

city reputation since prohibition, the [ongoing] sex tourism here, as well as our Latin tolerance," says Montreal-based *WEBDREAMS* director Ziad Touma. "The city is truly unique in North America and it helps that Montrealers are also very good-looking. Webmasters and porn producers have made the city their hub because of the talent they can find here, sometimes more than NYC, Miami and L.A. Montreal is also a tech-advanced city and [developing] technology is a major player in [online] porn, which in turn pushes the boundaries of the Internet."

This is the world Touma explores in *WEBDREAMS*. There is former Montreal

Then there is Dave Angelo who, at 35, says (with, I assume, a straight face) that the porn industry is not ageist.

stripper Malezia, 20, on the verge of signing with Vivid Entertainment, the world's largest producer of adult films. "We have an amazing scene where [famed porn director and drag queen] Chi Chi LaRue directs [Malezia's] first double-penetration scene," Touma says. "And we also see her lesbian relationship. Malezia has sex with men for a living but loves a woman."

There is also notorious dreadlocked webmaster Dugmor, Katrina of Porn Star Academie, as well as the multi-million-dollar 2Much Crew Webcam Studio in Old Montreal. Then there is Dave Angelo who, at 35, says (with, I assume, a straight face) that the porn industry is not ageist. "The business is

selling what the people are asking for," Angelo tells me over the phone. "The business follows the money. It's not about young or old. If you're old and you haven't taken care of yourself, you can't show that on TV."

"What I really like about Dave—and in casting what really struck me—is the way he invented a lifestyle," Touma says. "He became very famous with Colt. He is married to his wife Mona and both are bisexual. They are heterosexually monogamous and homosexually promiscuous. Their dream is to build a website. So we film Mona filming Dave jerking off at a truck stop and having a threesome in a tub of milk chocolate at [Montreal's famed] Black and Blue [circuit party]. Dave also escorts in NYC and, in a very intimate scene, we see him servicing a client."

Does Angelo ever feel like an object? "No," he says, then admits he is leaving the porn biz after refusing to renew his contract with Colt last December. "The business has changed so much in the last year and I don't want to be in the sex industry anymore. I want to be in a business that's more human. It's time to move on."

Angelo is co-founding a new company called Mr. Poubelle to investigate and clean up sites for insurance companies. But whether he is in Montreal, Paris or NYC, he says, "People still recognize me on the street all the time. They approach me as a star. But once they shake and squeeze my hand, they realize I'm human and they're respectful."

The 10-part *WEBDREAMS* airs Fridays at 10 p.m. (ET/PT) on Showcase beginning September 2. ☐



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This little piggie went to market...

Alright, Chris isn't much of a pig, but he *did* go to the Old Strathcona Farmer's Market

By CHRISTOPHER THRALL

My theory: the best place for a Saturday brunch is the Old Strathcona Farmers' Mar-

ket. I don't mean the typical free-samples-until-you're-full, though; I mean a fresh, inexpensive, tailor-made meal of locally produced items accompanied by a leisurely stroll and

FARMERS

some wonderful entertainment. I cracked my eyes open at 9 a.m. and was on the High Level trolley by 10 to prove my case.

I joined the throngs, easily spotting the regulars by their cloth bags or wicker baskets. The first kiosk on my left offered a summer festival classic: a thick green-onion cake (\$2.50) took an edge off my hunger and was much tastier after I stopped dipping it into the honey garlic sauce I chose. I nibbled and ambled, admiring the fares and wares, but the Farmers' Market is also a terrific place for people-watching. Hot granolas, born-again boomers and aging



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hippies foraged noisily in the quiet hum of industrial lighting.

After the onion cake, I opted for a decent self-serve coffee (\$1.50) from the cafeteria in back. Halfway down the next aisle, I discovered that dessert would be my next course. The stack of succulent butter tarts at **Gramma Bear's Home Baking** called to me. I seized one (\$1), bit through the thick tart and savoured its sweet, gooey interior.

I was a little bemused to see a man watching me intently, SECURITY emblazoned in white across the front and back of his black shirt. In January,

the Market hired security to police the washrooms for drinkers and scan the crowds for spangers or shoplifters. I asked him what he recommended and followed his directions to **Lipsmack-ers Meat Pies & Ethnic Pastries**. I searched amidst samosas and Jamaican patties for the meat portion of my brunch. I quickly decided on a beef sausage roll (\$3.75) that was bigger than a baby's arm. Since the health code forbids Lipsmackers from serving food for immediate consumption, I visited a nearby microwave to heat the roll. The hefty, mildly spiced sausage roll sported the light, flaky crust I

craved. Suddenly, my ears perked up.

ONE OF THE GREATEST PARTS of an Farmers' Market experience is the entertainment. Chad, an accordion player, was raising money for University (or NAIT, according to his sign). Unfortunately, he didn't know "The Log Driver's Waltz," so I continued on. Down another aisle, I followed a lilting melody that drifted over the crowd. A 15-year-old girl with braces across a beautiful smile wove music from her harpstrings. Fifteen metres

SEE PAGE 13

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The battle of the midway

Vue Weekly braves crowds, indigestion, wasps, WASPs and shitty buskers to bring you the lowdown on this year's Fringe food fare

By TB PLAYER

Fringe time! Whoo! Festival City's most awesomest festival. Sure, it doesn't have the rides of K-days or the guy screaming, "do you wanna go faster?" or the huddled unwashed

masses of Folk Fest, or even the sheer variety of meats-on-sticks that is Heritage Days. But the Fringe has theatre, and that makes us feel smart, which we like. It also has the Fringe midway; a full-blast hullabaloo of food, beer, buskers and suburbanites who, once a year, decide to slum it and maybe buy some ethnic

HEARTBURN

trinkets or get a hair-wrap cuz it's so, y'know, edgy.

It was into this press of human flesh that my friend (we'll call him KC) and I ventured on Saturday, with a goal to sample as much Fringe cuisine as we could stomach. I hadn't eaten all day, and by two o'clock I was feeling rather peckish. After giving the strip the once-over, we decided on the New Asian Village kiosk. The smell of the chicken kabobs (\$6) made up my mind for me, while KC opted for the more conservative beef samosa (\$1.75). The kabobs weren't especially spicy or exotic, but the roasted veggies were crisp and it proved a good starting point. Sadly, KC's samosa was so dry that half of it was carried off by the wind before he could finish it. We decided that this would be a good time to visit the beer tent and formulate a solid plan of attack.

When we did this same Fringe food quest last year, we had a number of rules of conduct concerning our gluttony: (1) No elephant ears, green onion cakes or meat-on-a-stick; (2) No repetition; (3) All courses must be followed by a trip to the beer tent. We decided to adhere to all of these except for the meat-on-a-stick rule. There were just too many fine treats to be had in this form, and we didn't want to exclude them.

LEAVING THE TENT, we headed over to the next group of kiosks by the library. There, up on the menu board, I saw my destiny: the deep-fried Mars bar. I vowed that, barring any total gastro-intestinal meltdown, I would return here before the end of the day. But not just yet. I needed more substantial fare to keep me going, and I found it at the very next kiosk, a Philippine food joint. I was again talked into buying something by my nose, as huge plumes of delicious-smelling smoke wafted off the BBQ inside. I bought the beef-BBQ-on-a-stick (\$2.50), while KC tried out the pork. As well, we each got a deep-fried banana wrap (\$0.75). These items, freshly made, were way too hot to eat, so we made our way back to the beer tent.

In line for another, the beer lady asked KC where he got the "fine piece of meat." "Genetics," said he. She asked where that was, and we made our way giggling to an open table. The BBQ was fantastic. And not only did we like it, but the 10 or 12 wasps buzzing our table seemed to lose their shit over it too. The banana wraps, greasy as they were, were also delicious. By far, the Philippine place gave the best bang for your buck that we found. At the other end of that spectrum was Baba Rosa's Ukrainian food. Everything there looked tempting, but if KC's Ukrainian folks ever found out he'd paid a buck per perogy at a midway kiosk he'd never hear the end of it.

OUR APPETITE FOR GRASE whetted, we made our way to the Churros King. I had the small but tasty queso (battered, deep-fried cheese, \$2), while KC tried the sopaipillas (deep-fried crisp pumpkin bread, \$2). The queso was very nice, but could have used a bit more cheese. KC was intrigued by his choice, saying it



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would be equally good with either hot sauce or powdered sugar. Our enjoyment was somewhat marred by the painful caterwauling of the a cappella group performing nearby. Really—besides the Fringe and maybe the opening of a new Suzy Shier in Capilano Mall, what do these guys do all year? Apparently not a lot of practicing. Just the excuse we needed to slip back to the beer tent for a bit. On the way, we grabbed a couple of gyros (\$6) from Santa Lucia. My chicken gyro was rather standard, but KC's proved to have a fine, spicy kick.

We spent a little more time than usual in the beer tent; digesting, reading the paper and getting ready for that last push to victory. Looking over the sports section and reading about the Olympic hockey camp, I came to a startling revelation. Maybe I'm crazy, or maybe the beers were hitting me, but doggone it, Canada's got an embarrassingly good team. This team's greatness will be measured not by who is on it, but by how many great players and NHL team captains don't make the team. Scary.

After chewing that over for a while, we headed out in search of dessert. I could still walk, so I got myself over to the stall selling the deep-fried Mars bars. Things are hazy by this point, so I can't remember the name, but it's over by the root beer cart. Three bucks got me one, and I gotta say, it was worth the wait. Grease, sugar, chocolate. Done. Mission accomplished. I was feeling pretty proud of myself when KC

showed up and took the wind right out of my sails. Over in the next little clump of stalls he found a little Thai place with a hand-written sign. There he purchased the coconut rice with mango and ice cream (\$4.50) which, as it turns out, is the best thing you can buy at this year's Fringe. Hands down. There I was, completely stuffed, full of meat, beer, chocolate and cheese, and I just couldn't stop eating it. Go. Get it. It's the smart thing to do. And you like feeling smart, remember? ☺

Farmers Market

Continued from page 11

away, an eight-year-old boy fiddled a lively tune. Each musician cost me a toonie: not a bad deal for the soundtrack to my brunch.

By this time, I knew what my next course would be and made my way to the **Happy Camel** and the best hummus in town. I picked up eight fresh pitas (\$4.75) and a small hummus (\$2) for a sit-down snack at

one of the nearby tables.

I resolved to finish my meal with something healthy and sweet, but lingered an instant too long in front of **Rainbow Fudge**. I couldn't resist an authentic peanut butter cup (\$1). Thick, rich chocolate enveloped real peanut butter under a sprinkle of crushed peanuts for a sinful treat. I fled and took refuge in front of **Walker's Own Produce**, where I found B.C. fruits offered by a sweet local girl. She bagged eight huge oxheart plums (\$4) for me with a smile. They were sweet and firm, unex-

pectedly loaded with juice, and tart enough in the peel to balance out the whole. Because of their size, I could only polish off two before I was done.

I doubt I could be served a better brunch, and no restaurant in the city could offer this kind of environment. I ate \$14.12 worth of delight, tipped buskers and brought home some great leftovers. I could get used to this. ☺

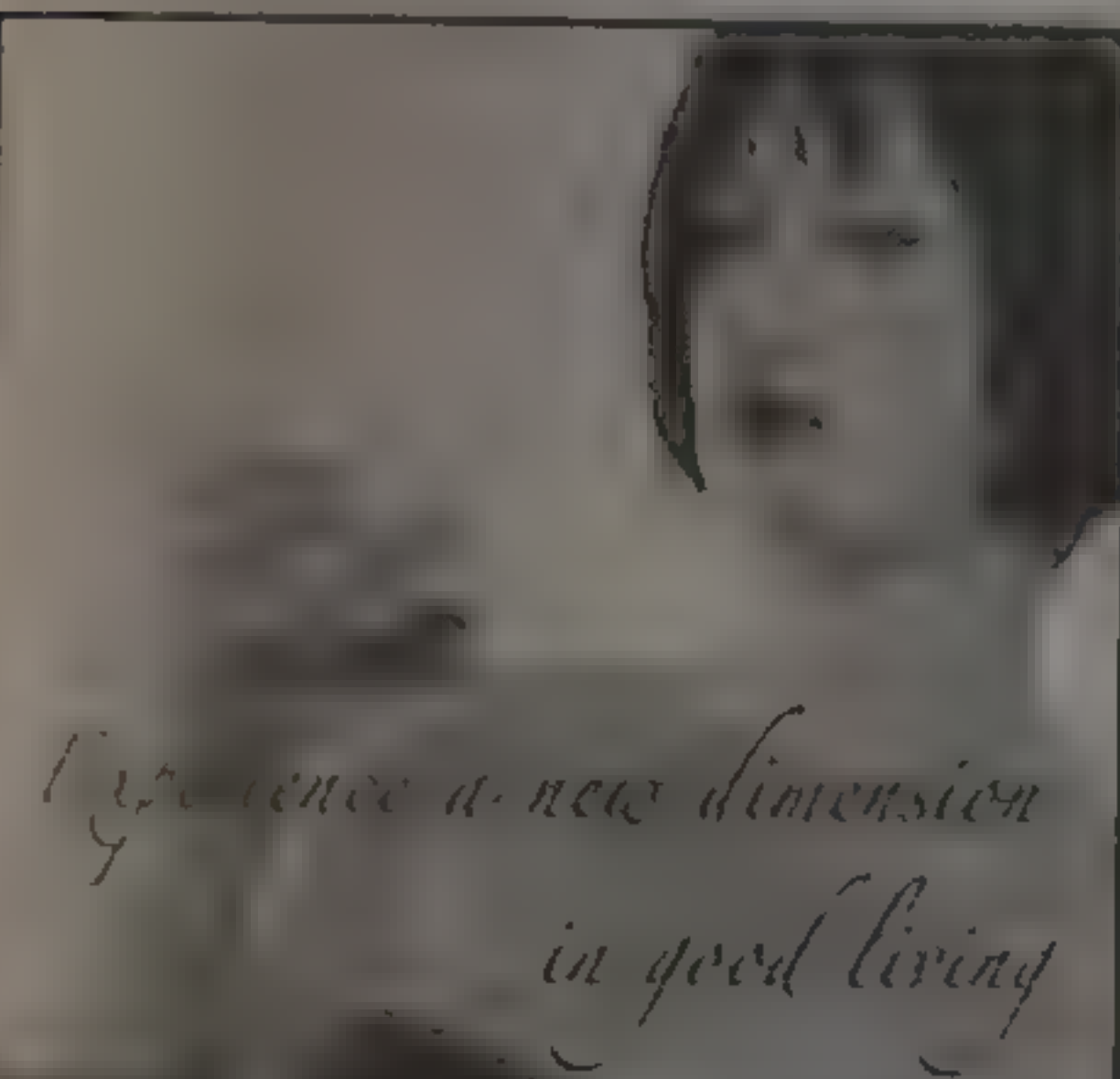
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Firing on all Synapses

Local youth group iHuman to showcase young talent in night of art and poetry

By MINISTER FAUST

True to the stereotype of Canadian teenaged girls, Edmonton artist Kirsten Sikora spent much of her youth writing poems to explore and record her angst. But unlike most of her age- and gender-mates, Sikora spent much of that adolescence homeless on the asphalt of Victoria, a self-described street kid and heroin addict. Those experiences form the ammunition of her salvo *Sundry*: A

Book of Poems, a verse-volume whose birth speaks not only to her own near-miss with slow and fast suicide, but to those who intervene to save at-risk youth from society and themselves.

This Saturday (August 27), Sikora will be performing at *Synapse: The Spark that Connects*, described by organizers as an attempt to elevate "the issue of youth-at-risk through lyrical art and verse." Sikora will be reading from her debut *Sundry*, whose no-frills production may reflect the artificial deadline imposed on the project by Sextant Publishing's Ken Chapman. With only two weeks to work, Chapman and Sikora turned a selection of her verse into *Sundry* just in time to make Sikora eligible to become Edmonton's first poet laureate.

While Sikora didn't achieve the post, on Saturday she'll be performing alongside winner Alice Major and acclaimed poet-performer Dawn Carter.

So just how did Sikora survive her meteoric descent? Crediting her mother and an Edmonton youth-intervention group, she beams, "My mom was always there supporting me, and was so happy when I found iHuman because I started to smile and laugh and be me again the way I was when I was a little kid, before everything went sour. She's stuck by me and held out hope when there was absolutely no right to hope."

Her political-organizer mother had good reason to be enthusiastic about iHuman, the youth arts program headquartered in a graffitied building on the corner of downtown's CN grounds. According to its website, iHuman has won multiple awards for its interventions into the lives of Edmonton's most troubled youths, encouraging personal and thereby community development through visual arts, drama and poetry. The group has also participated in numerous conferences whose topics range from crime prevention to art therapy.

SIKORA SAYS the facilitators and fellow youth of iHuman were instrumental to her transformation from self-doubt and self-destruction to

creative expression and personal redemption. Eager to turn her back on substance abuse and initially excited by what she saw in the group, she quickly began short-circuiting the machinery of her self-renewal by imagining the group's adults and teens rejecting her, worrying that "they wouldn't want me, I wouldn't fit in, or they'd eventually find me out," she says. "They did, actually—they found me out and

PREVIEW POETRY

helped me become the kind of person that I thought I might be. They did that mostly by tricking me," she says, laughing. "One girl lured me out from under a table with the temptation of doing a mylar print—which I had never even heard of before—and my curiosity got the better of me." Since then, she's gone on to become an excellent painter; indeed, one of her paintings—a melancholy, hopeful sunset-and-dusk close-up of a girl—forms the cover of *Sundry*.

From that initial opportunity she began working with fellow teens on other projects, including a street version of *Carmen*. She'd been forced out of her shy reluctance by what she saw as the misogyny of fellow iHumanists who were, in her irony-soaked inflection, "hip-hop gangsta

boys," who nevertheless were "really welcoming, despite the fact that we argued." In fact, when she returned the following day to continue working on the drama, the hip-hoppers were delighted, praising her for helping them to work through their artistic roadblocks, praise she'd never received anywhere else. Since then, she's continued to grow in confidence and in artistic strength. "There are quite a few people who have flipped open the book and gone, '(Gasp!) The poetry's actually good!'" she says. "The more I write, the stronger I grow as a writer; the more I read, the stronger I grow as a writer, as an artist."

Her typical eloquence is heightened when she's pushed to explain what she can accomplish with her paintings that she can't through her poems. "There's a level of raw honesty that gets lost in words," she laments. "It's really easy to get enamoured in words and rhythms. There's a raw honesty that comes out in the colours. It's the things I can't express.... I write to paint pictures for people of what experiences are like, and I paint pictures to tell stories of how I was feeling where words fail." ☐

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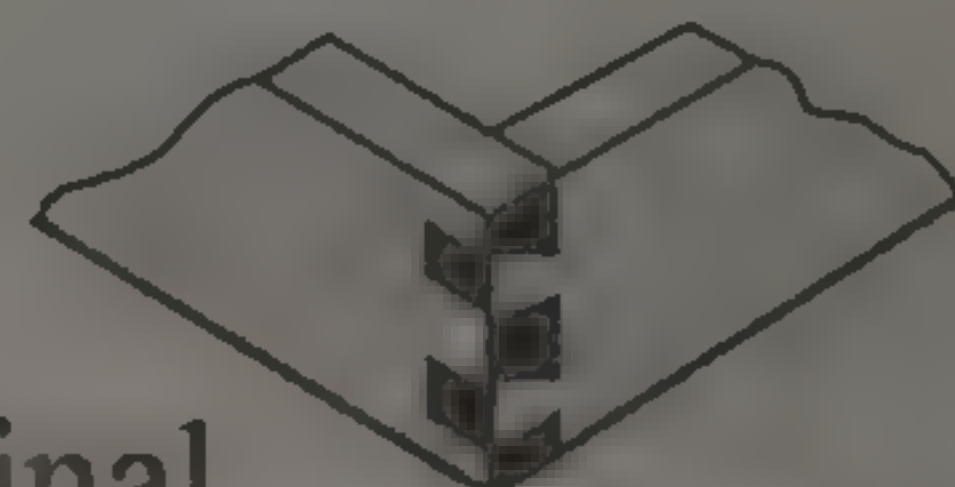
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Eaten alive

The Robot Ate Me's Ryland Bouchard gets back on guitar with *Carousel Waltz*

By ROSS MOROZ

San Diego seems like a pretty nice town. The temperature hovers between 70 and 90 all year long, there are at least half a dozen world-class surfing beaches within the city limits, and anyone who tires of SD's surprising cleanliness, friendliness and relative safety can take a half-hour train ride to the real "happiest place on earth," Tijuana. Still, indie-pop icons The Robot Ate Me, one of San Diego's most creative musical exports, recently decided the "finest city in America" wasn't really all it's cracked up to be, prompting a move to far less fashionable quarters.

"In San Diego they have the naval base and the air force base and everyday there'd be fighter jets coming in or a big warship leaving and it was just too much to have it staring you right in the face," bemoans The Robot Ate Me's Ryland Bouchard, on the phone from his new home on the tiny gulf islands community of *San Marcos, Washington*. "Living up here I don't feel as connected to the military and corporate culture of the United States."

Living a simpler life in the wilds of Northwestern Washington seems to have translated into a more sparse and minimalist feel for The Robot Ate Me's new album, *Carousel Waltz*. Unlike their previous album, 2004's expansive, atmospheric, orchestral, and arguably self-indulgent double-disc *On Vacation*, *Carousel Waltz* clocks in at just over 30 minutes and

delivers quiet, ethereal folk pop with minimal instrumentation.

"I kind of go through phases where I hate playing guitar, and on *On Vacation* that was sort of where I was, but for this one I decided I wanted to just write songs again," Bouchard explains. "With this album I was definitely going more for a '60s sort of aesthetic. I was trying to keep the record more song-based—I stripped away all the ear candy away just focused on the lyrics."

PREVIEW POP

In an indie pop community that is somewhat inexplicably turning its attention to a more Duran Duran-ified decade, Bouchard's '60s affinity might seem a bit, well, un-hip, but he's not about to apologize for that. "I always kind of like to focus on things that other artists aren't focusing on," Bouchard says. "I started writing some dance-pop stuff, but I thought it sounded ridiculous, so it never went anywhere."

"I really think musicians have to realize that music can be positive and can mean something," he continues, "instead of just being about how hip you are or how cool your haircut is."

BESIDES, Bouchard argues, the parallels between the '60s and the present day situation in the western world are overwhelmingly obvious. "We're definitely in a '60s era, with a Vietnam-style war going on and people dying on the news every night," he says. "You'd think that artists would be addressing that, but unfortunately in America it seems like musicians are focused on getting famous and getting on a major label and selling a lot of T-shirts,

and although everyone isn't like that, it's definitely on the rise."

For Bouchard, the dearth of meaningful popular music is just another product of the increased corporatization of America, including the music industry. "The larger record labels assume this is what people want to hear—they're appealing to the lowest common denominator," he says. "I know a lot of musicians who are putting out really heartfelt music, but there is definitely a death of independent music and radio, at least here in the States."

Like many of his peers in the American independent music world, Bouchard expresses vociferous opposition to the ubiquitous American way of life, to the point of considering relocation. "I get frustrated with the United States, because it seems every aspect of the way we live, from healthcare to food production to education, has been corporatized to the point where you cannot do anything responsibly," he explains. "We've just gotten out of control down here—what we save in taxes we end up paying for many times over in health care costs and insurance and things like that."

So, um, when will Bouchard be applying for his Canadian citizenship? "My first step was moving up here [to Anacortes], an hour away from Canada," he laughs, admitting to a bit of a crush on our home and native land. "Living in Northern Washington, I get the CBC sometimes, and it's way better than what we have down here, and I love touring up there, so, yeah, maybe in the next couple of years I'll be moving on up." ☺

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THE ROBOT ATE ME

with guests RUN CHICO RUN and CITY STREETS

SAT SEPT 10TH

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ceptions generated by shifting time signatures, lengthy instrumental breaks and pyrotechnic guitar work.

"Prog is fine, metal is fine, rock is fine—we wouldn't be upset by any label, really," he clarifies. "If all that means is that we're trying to play music that is a little more complex than most stuff that's out there, then so be it. Really, though, we're just a rock band."

So far, figuring out what label to enter into the "genre" box when Portal songs are ripped into iTunes has been a largely hypothetical problem, although with any luck the band's fans will be facing this conundrum in the very near future, as Portal are about to release their first album, *Element*, with a CD release bash this Saturday at Red's. The disc is almost brazenly unpop, un-punk, and un-anything else currently burning up the top 40 charts, but Brooks remains unrepentant about the utter lack of kitschy '80s dance-rock or sugary pop-punk on his band's new recording.

"Right now music seems to be headed in a very pop direction, which I'm totally down with, but we just wanted to take music in a different direction," he explains. "There're a million trends, there're are a million styles, and maybe this is naïve, but I still believe that at the end of the day if you play good music you'll be successful, and all we're trying to do is play the very best music we know how to play."

This aesthetic (or lack thereof) extends to Portal's almost subdued live show, which is noticeably absent of the choreographed ninja kicks and pouty posturing so often on display on the illustrious stage of Red's. "We want to make sure that the music comes first," says Brooks, acknowledging the occasional fan suggestion to "jump around more" while playing. "The main thing is that we're all very tight and playing our instruments as well as we can—everything else is secondary as long as the music sounds good," he continues, adding, with only a small amount of naivety, that "we figure people would rather hear a band that sounds cool than looks cool."

No Birds • With the Wolfnote, Aids Wolf, Fractal Pattern and The Last Deal • Latitude 53 • Mon, Aug 29 Director Michel Gondry's rejected treatment for an early Weezer video would have had the band playing a no-holds-barred soccer match against a Mexican heavy-metal band while both teams played their respective hits. Really, it's no surprise they ended up going with that whole *Happy Days* thing, but Gondry's rationale for his bizarre concept was that he always felt rock bands sort of resembled soccer teams: the drummer, sitting in the back, staring at everyone's asses and not moving around, was basically a goaltender; the bassist helps out the drummer/goalie and stays out of the way like a defender, and the frontman hogs the glory and jumps around like a striker, and so on.

Cool idea, but with most of the rock bands of the time boasting curling-esque four- or five-man rosters, the metaphor is shaky at best. In these

heady, post-Arcade Fire days of 2005, however, more and more Canadian bands are beginning to sport, um, sport-sized membership lists, and Saskatoon post-rock collective No Birds is no exception. With eight members (playing violin, cello, bass, drum, trombone, guitar, trumpet and sax), No Birds resembles a high-school marching band headed to a festival, complete with all the inherent logistical headaches that go along with moving eight humans and a mess of equipment around the country.

"I don't know how we organize it, but somehow it works out," bassist Mehta Young assures *Music Notes* on the phone from a gig in Thunder Bay. For Young, his band's expansive lineup isn't all that strange—if anything, the rock tradition of the power trio or quartet is a more oddball arrangement.

"There's a pretty venerable tradition of large ensembles in popular music, especially in the jazz and big band tradition," Young explains. "You

can do so many more interesting things this way."

As it turns out, Young isn't the only one who's interested. Having been together barely two years, No Birds has already garnered rave reviews, being favorably compared to groups like Silver Mt. Zion and Rachels, and has attracted the attention of Teargas, a record company-cum-artist's club born out the same vibrant and incestuous Saskatchewan indie rock scene as No Birds.

"When you're in a really small, tight-knit community, everybody ends up in everybody else's bands, and a lot of people end up learning how to play a lot of different types of music. There just aren't enough people for it to get cliquey," Young says of his hometown scene, which he credits for spawning No Birds. "Everyone knows everyone, and we all see each other at shows, so one summer we just decided we should try to make a band—or, you know, a 'collective.'" ♡

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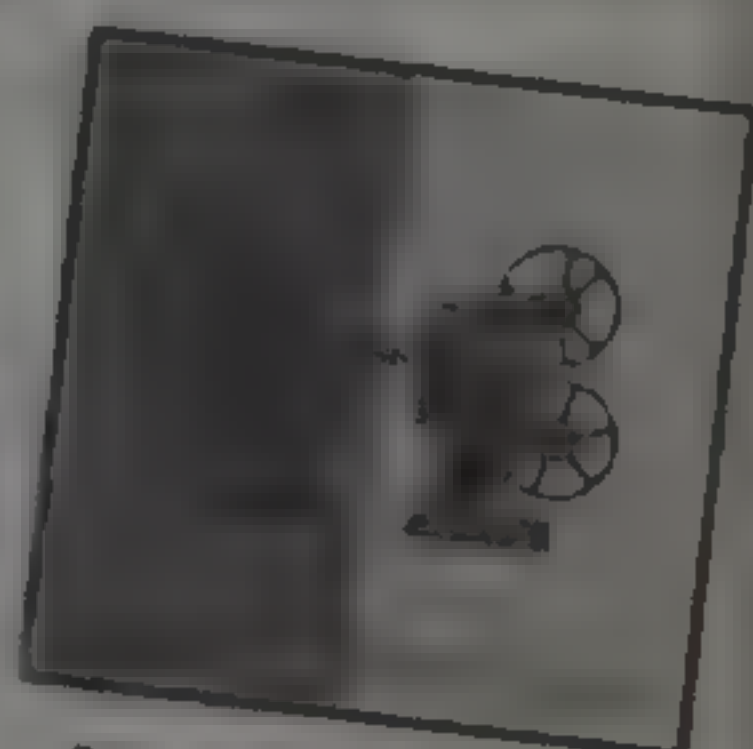
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2. The Agnostic Mountain Gospel Choir - Fight & Onions (amgo)
3. John Prine - Fair & Square (oh boy)
4. Buck 65 - Secret House Against The World (warner)
5. Martha Wainwright - Martha Wainwright (maple)
6. System Of A Down - Mezmerize (American)
7. Whitey Houston - Whitey Houston (rectangle)
8. Son Volt - Okemah & The Melody Of Riot (sony/bmg)
9. Sufjan Stevens - Illinoise (asthmatic kitty)
10. Sharon Jones & The Dap Kings - Naturally (daptone)
11. The Wallnote - Sacred Bodies (bor)
12. Eliza Gilkyson - Paradise Hotel (red house)
13. Cursive - The Difference Between Houses & Homes (saddle creek)
14. Arcade Fire - Arcade Fire (merge)
15. Marie Muldaur - Sweet Lovin' Of Soul (stonypian)
16. John Hart - Masters Of Disaster (new west)
17. Gomez - Demon Days (panopnone)
18. The Most Serene Republic - Underwater Cinematographer (a&c)
19. Arcade Fire - Funeral (merge)
20. Chip Taylor & Carrie Rodriguez - Red Dog Tracks (train wreck)
21. Lucinda Williams - Live @ The Filmore (lost highway)
22. The Juan Maclean - Less Than Human (dfa)
23. Frank Black - Honeycomb (back porch)
24. Joni Mitchell - Songs Of A Prairie Girl (nonesuch)
25. Columbus - Debut EP (pop niche)
26. Amos Lee - Amos Lee (blue note)
27. Pink Martini - Hang On Little Tomato (heinz)
28. Ryan Adams - Cold Roses (lost highway)
29. Mary Gauthier - Mercy Now (lost highway)
30. Bomba! - Entre Sol Y Luz (bomba)

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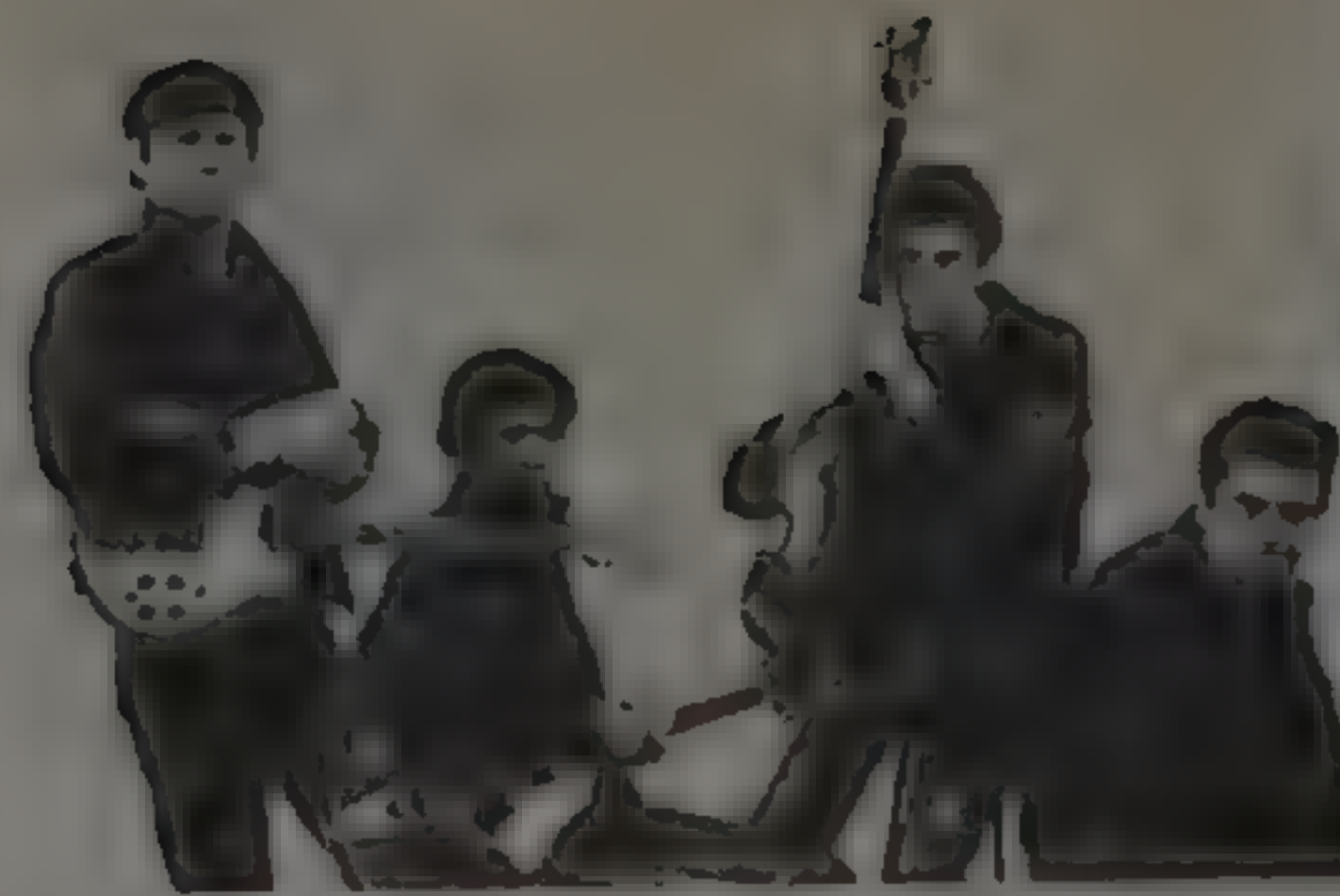
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ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL Jimmy Whiffen and Duff Robison; 9pm

BACKDRAUGHT PUB Open stage

BLUE CHAIR Melnychuk

CEILI'S Screech; 9pm

CHRISTOPHER'S PARTY PUB Open stage hosted by Alberta Crude; 6-10pm

DUSTER'S PUB Jam hosted by Brian Petch

FOUR ROOMS MacDonald

GRINDER Open stage hosted by Audrey Lidster; 9-12pm

J AND R BAR AND GRILL Open stage with The Poster Boys (pop/rock/blues); 8:30pm-12:30am

O'BYRNE'S The Marco Claveria Trio

RED'S Tempest Green, guests; 8pm

URBAN LOUNGE My Sister Ocean, guests

SIDETRACK CAFÉ Dual, C.R. St. John, Radioforhelp; 9pm; \$8 (door)

CLASSICAL

KING'S METROPOLITAN UNITED CHURCH Mack (organ); 8-8:45pm; free/collection at door

DJS

ARMOURY Vintage Thursdays: retro rock, dance and old school hip hop

BACKROOM VODKA BAR Animation Station: trip hop, drum 'n' bass with MC Deadly, Gundam, Dale Force

BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE Escapack Entertainment

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Thump: intronica with the DDK Soundsystem

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB DJ Squiggles

DECADANCE South Eastern with Sweetz, T-Bass, Rezidnt Funk

ESCAPE ULTRA LOUNGE Thursday Ladies Night: Top 40, R&B, retro with Urban Metropolis

FILTHY NASTY STICK Rock Bingo with DJ S.W.A.G.

GAS PUMP Ladies Nite: Top 40/dance with DJ Christian

GUILTY MARTINI Substance Thursdays: urban with Urban Substance Sound Crew, Invoiceable, Spincycle, J-Money, Shortround, Echo; no minors

KAS BAR Urban House: with DJ Mark Stevens; 9pm

NEWCASTLE PUB AND GRILL Students Night Hip Hop with DJ Odin

NEW CITY LIXWID LOUNGE Rub-a-Dub: with Jebus and Anarchy Adam

OVERTIME BOILER AND TAPROOM SOUTH to New: classic rock, R&B, urban and dance with DJ Mikee; 9pm-2am; no cover

RED STAR Underground Hip Hop Night: with DJ Mumps, DJ Dusty Kratz, DJ Nato

THE ROOST Rotating shows: Sticky's open stage and the Weakest Link game with DJ Jazzy second and last Thursday; \$1 (member)/\$4 (non-member)

SAPPHIRE RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE Funkdified Thursday: funk with DJ Leanne Fong

SAVOY Funk and down-tempo with Ben Jamin

STOLLI'S ON WHYTE Top 40 dance, R&B

VICTORY LOUNGE NRMLS WLCM Thursdays: electro, disco-punk, hip hop with DJ Nik7 and guests; no minors; 9pm (door); \$4

WUNDERBAR Up and Down Thursdays: With Djs Loopin' the 3rd, Big Slice

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CASINO EDMONTON Urban Myth (pop/country)

CASINO YELLOWHEAD Stars Tonight (tribute show)

CEILI'S The Kick It Bros; 9pm

FOUR ROOMS Dominelli

J.J.'S PUB Barkin' Spiders (rock)

JEFFREYS CAFÉ AND WINE BAR Jamie Calan and Darcy Phillips (country, rock); \$5

MEAD HALL Red Tide, Caveat (CD release party), Acantha; 9pm (door), 10pm (show); \$8 (door)

NEWCASTLE PUB The Great Escape (classic rock); no cover

RED'S Portal (CD release party), Sugakane, Hazeldean; no minors; 8:30pm (door); \$5

SIDETRACK CAFÉ Joel Kroeker, James Murdoch Band, The Deon Blyan

Band; 9pm; \$10 (door)

URBAN LOUNGE Connor's Road; \$5

VICTORY LOUNGE The Robot Ate Me, Run Chico Run, The City Streets; no minors; 8pm (door); \$10 (door)

X WRECKS The Shufflehound; 8:30pm-12:30; no cover

DJS

ARMOURY Fridays: Top 40 downstairs/retro 80 upstairs

AYUCAR LATIN NIGHT CLUB Top 40 with Latin band and DJ Papi

BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE Escapack Entertainment

BOOTS Retro Disco: retro dance

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB Dance party with DJ Alvaro

CALIENTE Fridays: urban with DJ Invoiceable; 10pm (door); no minors

DANTE'S BISTRO Johnny Sky

DECADANCE Ladies Night sexy house with Smoov, guests

ESCAPE ULTRA LOUNGE Urban Metropolis

GAS PUMP Top 40/dance with DJ Christian

HALO Mod Club: '60s with DJ Blue Jay, DJ Trav VD; \$5

IRON HORSE Urban dance party

NEW CITY LIXWID LOUNGE Your Weekly AA Meeting: with Jebus and Adam

NEW CITY SUBURBS Trasheteria: Punk, classics, electro, new with DJ Texas Chainsaw Mascara and New City Crue

ONE ON WHYTE Retro, top 40, R&B with DJ Crownroyal

OVERTIME BOILER AND TAPROOM SOUTH to New: classic rock, R&B, urban and dance with DJ Mikee; 9pm-2am; no cover

THE ROOST Upstairs: Euro Blitz: best new European music with DJ Outtawak Downstairs: DJ Jazzy; \$4 (member)/\$6 (non-member)

RUM JUNGLE Peoples DJ Spinning

SAPPHIRE RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE Deep House: with Friday resident DJ Luke Morrison

SAVOY DJ Busy B; no cover

SIDETRACK CAFÉ Southerly, The Conversation, Old Seed, 7pm (early show), \$8 (door); The Mocking Shadows, 9pm, \$10 (door)

SPORTSWORLD ONLINE AND ROLLER DISCO Top 40 request, mix of retro and disco; 7pm-12am

STANDARD All New Q107 Fridays: hosted by Harman B and DJ Kwake, live to air

STARLITE ROOM Cherry Fridays: alternative dance with DJ Jason; no cover; 9pm; \$4

STONEHOUSE PUB Top 40 with DJ Tysin

TWILIGHT AFTERHOURS House/breaks/garage with Smoov, Dane, T-Bass, Rezidnt Funk, Vinny Vo, Dusty Grooves, Sweetz; 1am-8am

WUNDERBAR Sergio Georgini's Friday Wind Down: With DJ Calibar

Y AFTERHOURS Foundation house/breaks/garage with Anthony Donahue, Nestor Delano, Dragon, Ryan Wade, Roofio, Bree, Nic-E; 1am-8am

SAT LIVE MUSIC

ALLEGRO Terry Jorden (piano); 7-10pm

ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL Jimmy Whiffen

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE The Wheat Pool

CASINO EDMONTON Urban Myth (pop/country)

CASINO YELLOWHEAD Stars Tonight (tribute show)

BRIND (JASPER AVENUE) The Shufflehound with "Uptown" Freddy Brown (blues/roots); 4-7pm

FIRST CITY Doug Organ Trio (jazz)

FOUR ROOMS Dominelli

GRINDER

J.J.'S PUB Barkin' Spiders (rock)

JULIAN'S PIANO BAR The Fabulous Tuxedo Junkies; 8:30-11:30pm

NEWCASTLE PUB The Great Escape (classic rock); no cover

RED'S Bleed The Dream, CGeeley Estates, Dfinity, Glory Nights; 7pm (door), 8pm (show); all ages event; \$7.95 (adv)/\$10.95 (day of, door)

RENDEZVOUS Ossuary, Necrobiosis, Shovelfoot (metal)

SECOND CUP (SHERWOOD PARK) Erroll Zastre (jazz); 8-11pm

SIDETRACK CAFÉ The Retrofit; 9pm; \$10 (adv)/\$12 (door)

STARLITE ROOM Ibn Wyza, 1 Deep, Politic Live, Darkson Tribe, Self Rule, The Bleeding Alarm, Homewreckers, Our Mercury, Whiz Kids, Soulfah Fyah; noon (door); \$10 at Blackbyrd, Megatunes, Listen, Freecloud, FS (WEM)

URBAN LOUNGE Connor's Road

X-WRECKS The

Shufflehound; 8:30pm-12:30; no cover

DJS

AYUCAR LATIN NIGHT CLUB Top 40 with Latin band and DJ Papi

BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE Escapack Entertainment

BOOTS Flashback Saturdays: retro dance, house with Derrick

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB Arrowchaser

DANTE'S BISTRO DJ Johnny Sky

DECADANCE Static: house with LP and Tomek

ESCAPE ULTRA LOUNGE Urban Metropolis

GAS PUMP Top 40/dance with DJ Christian

GUILTY MARTINI Supreme Saturdays: urban with Invoiceable, Big Sun, DJ Game; 9pm (door); no minors

HALO Those Who Know house with DJ Jr. Brown, Winston Roberts, Remo; no minors

IRON HORSE Urban dance party

NEW CITY LIXWID LOUNGE Ass Shakin' Funk with Cool Curt and guests

NEW CITY SUBURBS Punk/alt/pop/dance with Blue Jay and Nikrofeelya

ONE ON WHYTE Music 4 The Masses: retro, top 40 R&B with DJ Crownroyal

OVERTIME BOILER AND TAPROOM SOUTH Retro to New: classic rock, R&B, urban and dance with DJ Mikee; 9pm-2am; no cover

RED STAR Indie rock, hip hop, rock, Brit pop with S Master F

THE ROOST Upstairs: Monthly theme parties, new music with DJ Jazzy

Downstairs: Retro music with DJ Dan and Mike; \$4 (member)/\$6 (non-member)

RUM JUNGLE Rum Jungle legendary Saturdays: hip hop, old school and R&B

SAPPHIRE RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE Unique house beats with Saturday resident DJ Tripswitch

SECRETS DJ Saturday with DJ (Naughty)

SPORTSWORLD ONLINE AND ROLLER DISCO Top 40 request, mix of retro and disco; 7pm-12am

STANDARD Live to Air

STONEHOUSE PUB Top 40 with DJ Tysin

TWILIGHT AFTERHOURS Hard house/trance/funky with Jeff Hillis, DTDR, Big Daddy, STX, Gryffin; 1am-9am

VICTORY LOUNGE 99 DJs; 8pm

WUNDERBAR Soundcheck Saturdays: With DJ Shumba and guest

Y AFTERHOURS Release funky/sexy/hard house

in Luke Morrison, Erin
Donovan, Darcy
Bryan Doyle, Tam-
ara

SUN LIVE MUSIC

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
Sundays. Funky
hosted by Rubim
Matta, Lane Arendt and
guests, no cover

**BLIND PIG PUB AND
GRILL** Carmen's Sunday
Jam

KEEP IT SIMPLE CLUB
Lucky (blues/roots); 3-
4pm, non-alcohol event

**NEWCASTLE PUB AND
GRILL** Open stage with
Willie James and Crawdad;
3pm

O'BRYNE'S Joe Bird's Irie
Jam; 9:30pm

RED'S Garbage; 7pm

ROSEBOWL Jam with the
Swampflowers; 10pm

SIDETRACK CAFÉ Under
the Covers Sundays: The
Sessions, DJ Dudeman;
9pm; \$6

DJS

**BACKSTAGE TAP AND
GRILL** Industry Night: with
Atomic Improve, Jameoki
and DJ Tim

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB
Sexy Sundays: all night and
all request dance party
with DJ Eddy Toonflash

CALIENTE Heritage Day
Celebration: 91.7, The
Bounce, DJ Invinceable;
Game, Weapon X; 10pm;
no minors

DECADANCE Worship
with Big Daddy, DTDR,
guests; 10am-close

THE GRINDER Soul
Sundays: with Rocko

NEW CITY LIKWID
LOUNGE Bust A Nut: with
Remo and Cool Curt

ONE ON WHYTE Sunday
Hospitality House Party:
with DJ Crownroyal

RUM JUNGLE Service
Industry Night

SAVOY French pop mixed
with Deja DJ

STOLLI'S ON WHYTE
House Arrest Sundays: With
Johnny Dangerous, Andy
Inertia

VICTORY LOUNGE Self
Help Sundays: punk rock,
hip hop with DJ Slipped
Disc

WUNDERBAR A Whole
Lot of Shakin' Sundays:
rockabilly, psychobilly

MON LIVE MUSIC

DRUID (South) Open
Stage with Chris Wynters
and guests

**HONEST MUR'S BAR
AND GRILL** Open
stage/jam every Monday
hosted by the Retro
Rockets Band; 8pm-mid-
night

LATITUDE 53 Rock
Lobsters, The Wolfnote,
Aids Wolf, Fractal Pattern,
The Last Deal; 6pm (door),
7pm (show); all ages
licensed event

TAPHOUSE Monday Live:
with Big Tickle; 8:30-
11:30pm; no cover

SIDETRACK CAFÉ Open
Stage Mondays with Ben
Spencer

DJS

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
DJ Pennytyntary

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB
Ashley Love and DJ Alvaro

FILTHY McNASTY'S
Metal Mondays: with DJ
S.W.A.G.

NEW CITY LIKWID
LOUNGE DJ Dusty Grooves

O'BRYNE'S Hip Mondays:
industry night with DJ
Finnegan, live music

SIDETRACK CAFÉ Open
Stage Mondays with host
Ben Spencer; 9pm; no
cover

STOLLI'S ON WHYTE
Manic Monday: old skool
R&B, hip hop with Harman
8 and DJ Kwake

WUNDERBAR Rod
Torklesons Armada: Rock
and Roll with Herman
Menderchuck

TUE LIVE MUSIC

**BLIND PIG PUB AND
GRILL** Open stage with
Mark Ammar

DRUID (Jasper) Open
stage with Chris Wynters
and guests

LEGENDS PUB Open jam
hosted by Gary Thomas

O'BRYNE'S Celtic night
with Shannon Johnson and
friends; 9:30pm

SIDETRACK CAFÉ Living
Illusion (CD release party
and video shoot),
Hazeldean; 9pm; \$5
(adv)/\$7 (door)

URBAN LOUNGE Salsa
and the City; 9pm; Salsa
dance lessons 8pm; \$5
(door)

DJS

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
Viva: with DJ Sean

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB
Top 40 with DJ Stephan

CALIENTE Bashment
Tuesdays: reggae with

Bomb Squad, Q8, Chrome
Nine, Southside Sound,
open mic; 11pm; no minors

FILTHY McNASTY'S
Twisted Trivia with DJ Whit-
Ford

NEW CITY SUBURBS
Bingo with DJ Dildozer and
MC Fistingyourface

NEW CITY LOUNGE
Dominion with DJ Scott
and goth-metal guests

THE ROOST Flamingo
Bingo: with DJ Janny; 8-
midnight; \$1 (member)/\$4
(non-member)

**SAPPHIRE RESTAURANT
AND LOUNGE** Tapa
Tuesday: popular house
beats with DJ Kevin Wong

URBAN LOUNGE Salsa and
the City; 9pm; Salsa dance
lessons 8pm; \$5 (door)

VICTORY LOUNGE The
Youth Beat: hip-hop, elec-
tro, indie rock, dance punk,
funk with DJ Cadence
Weapon; no minors; 9pm
(door); \$2

WUNDERBAR Tuesday
Night Shakedown:
Featuring Hug Patrol

WED LIVE MUSIC

**ATLANTIC TRAP AND
GILL** Open mic night

FESTIVAL PLACE Qualico
Patio Series; Sillan and
Young (folk/urban jazz), Kris
Demeanor; 7:30pm; \$5

O'BRYNE'S Chris Wynters
and friends; 9:30pm

PLEASANTVIEW HALL
Northern Bluegrass Circle
Music Society bluegrass
jam; 7:30pm

ROSEBOWL
COMMUNITY HALL Live
Flower open stage hosted
by Brian Gregg; 8pm

SIDETRACK CAFÉ Jets to
Theory, Brian Byrne, Vivek

Shraya; 9pm; \$8 (door)

DJS

BACKROOM VODKA BAR
Wild Cherry: deep
house/progressive/breaks
with Tripswitch and guests

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
Glitter Gulch: with DJ Buster
Friendly; no cover

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB
Punk rock, electroshock
with DJ Eddy Toonflash

J.J.'S PUB Subculture
Night: psychobilly, rockabil-
ly, punk with DJ Kustom

LEGENDS PUB Hip-
Hop/R&B with DJ Spincycle

NEW CITY LIKWID
LOUNGE Glam, punk, indie
with DJ Skinny J, G-Wiz

RED STAR Funk 'n' Soul.
funk, disco, soul with Junior
Brown

THE ROOST Amateur Strip:
Weena Luv, Sticky Vicky
with DJ Alvaro; \$1 (mem-
ber)/\$4 (non-member)

STANDARD Wednesday
Gone Wild Feat: with DJ
Nestor Delano

STARLITE ROOM Lushious
Wednesdays: retro alterna-
tive dance with DJ Jason; no
minors; 9pm (door); \$4

STOLLI'S ON WHYTE Blue
Velvet: urban electronica
with Derelict and Soulus

VICTORY LOUNGE Panic
Wednesdays: 21st Century
Electro Disco Rock Mashup
with DJ David Stone; no
minors; 9pm (door); \$4

WUNDERBAR Psycho Nite:
With Djs Seizures, Jony
Bologna, Take it to the Hill
Rahil

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102.7
modern rock

FRIDAY-SATURDAY AUGUST 26-27

CONNORS ROAD

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 31

CIVIL SAVAGE With **ABSORB**

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 1 CD RELEASE

EUPHONIC plus **COLD SPOT**

FRIDAY-SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 2-3

OZZY OSMONDS

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DANCING LESSONS START AT 8PM
\$3.75 BOTTLES OF BRAMA EVERY TUESDAY!

WEEKDAYS AT

THE ONE

WEDNESDAY - SUNDAY

LOUNGE OPEN FOR LUNCH - 11:30 AM
HAPPY HOUR PRICING IN EFFECT UNTIL 8 PM

Wednesdays
Import & Satay Night

A NIGHT OF FINE TASTES. ALL IMPORT BEERS ON SPECIAL
AS WELL AS SKEWERS OF FINELY FLAVOURED MEATS.

IMPORT BEERS - \$4.50

SATAYS - \$1

Thursdays
Wine & Food Experience

3 OZ. EACH OF THREE WINE - STREET WINE - \$4.95
BEING THE PERFECTION OF TASTES AND FLAVORS

FREE TUESDAY - \$15

THE
ONE
ON WHYTE

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VENUE GUIDE

**ALLEGRO ITALIAN
KITCHEN** 10011-109 St,
424-6644

ARMOURY 10310-85
Ave, 702-1800

**ATLANTIC TRAP AND
GILL** 7704-104 St, 432-
4611

**AZUCAR LATIN NIGHT-
CLUB** 11733-78 St, 479-
7400

**BACKROOM VODKA
BAR** 10324A-82 Ave,
upstairs, 436-4418

**BACKSTAGE TAP AND
GRILL** 12536-137 Ave,
457-5483

BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE
Continental Inn, 16625
Stony Plain Rd, 484-7751

**BLACK DOG FREE-
HOUSE** 10425-82 Ave,
439-1082

**BLIND PIG PUB AND
GRILL** 32 St Anne
Street, St. Albert, 418-
6332

BLUE CHAIR CAFÉ
9624-76 Ave, 989-2861

BOOTS 10242-106 St,
423-5014

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB
11725B Jasper Ave,
484-6636

CALIENTE 10815 Jasper

Ave, 425-0850

CASINO (EDMONTON)
7055 Argyle Rd, 463-
9467

**CASINO (YELLOW-
HEAD)** 12464-153 St,
463-9467

CHATEAU LUIS
17328 Stony Plain Rd,
486-4448

DECADANCE 10018-
105 St, 990-1792

DRUID (JASPER AVE)
11606 Jasper Ave, 454-
9928

DRUID (SOUTH) 2940
Calgary Trail, 465-6800

**ESCAPE ULTRA
LOUNGE WEM**, 489-
1330

FESTIVAL PLACE
Festival Way, Sherwood
Park, 429-1000

FILTHY McNASTY'S
10511-82 Ave, 432-
5224

FIRST CITY 10136-100
St, 428-3399

FOUR ROOMS
Edmonton Centre, 102
Ave, 426-4767

GAS PUMP 10166-114
St, 488-4841

GRINDER 10957-124
St, 453-1709

GUILTY MARTINI
10338-81 Ave, 433-7183

HALO 10538 Jasper Ave,
423-HALO

**HONEST MUR'S BAR
AND GRILL** 8937-82
Ave, 463-6397

IRON HORSE STEU
Gateway Blvd, 438-1907

J.J.'S PUB 13160-118
Ave, 489-7462

**JEFFREY'S CAFÉ AND
WINE BAR** 9640-142 St,
451-8890

JULIAN'S PIANO BAR
Chateau Louis Hotel,
11727 Kingsway Ave,
732-4583

KAS BAR 10444-82 Ave,
433-6768

KEEP IT SIMPLE CLUB
11720-82 St, 471-4705

**KNOX METROPOLITAN
UNITED CHURCH HALL**
109 St, 439-1718

LATITUDE 53 10248-
106 St, 2nd Fl, 423-5353

LEGENDS PUB 6104-
172 St, 481-2786

NEWCASTLE PUB
6108-90 Ave, 490-1999

**NEW CITY LIKWID
LOUNGE** 10081 Jasper
Ave, 413-4578

NEW CITY SUBURBS
10081 Jasper Ave, down-
stairs, 413-4578

O'BRYNE'S 10616-82
Ave, 414-6766

ONE ON WHYTE
10544-82 Ave, 437-
7699

**OVERTIME BOWLE
AND TAPROOM**
SOUTH Whitemud
Crossing, 106 St, 485-
1717

RED STAR 10534 Jasper
Ave, 428-0825

RED'S WEM Phase III,
481-6420

RENDEZVOUS 10108-
149 St, 444-1822

THE ROOST 10345-104
St, 426-3150

ROSEBOWL 10111-117
St, 482-2589

ROYALTY HALL
10135-96 Ave, 429-
3624

RUM JUNGLE Phase 2,
upper level, WEM, 486-
9494

**SAPPHIRE
RESTAURANT AND
LOUNGE** Whyte Ave,
437-0231/710-1625

SAVOY 10401-82 Ave,
438-0373

**SECOND CUP (SHER-
WOOD PARK)** Wye
Road, 417-2226

SECRETS 10345-106 St,
423-5592

SIDETRACK CAFÉ

10333-112 St, 421-1326

SPORTSWORLD
**INDIAN AND ROLLER
DISCO** 13710-104 St,
472-6336

STANDARD 6107-104
St, 438-2582

STARLITE ROOM
10030-102 St, 428-1099

STOLLI'S ON WHYTE
201, 10368-82 Ave.,
437-2293

STONEHOUSE PUB
11012 Jasper Ave, 420-
0448

TAPHOUSE 9020
McKenny Ave, St. Albert,
458-0860

TICKETMASTER 451-
8888

TIX ON THE SQUARE
Interpretive Centre,
Churchill Sq, 9930-102
Ave, 420-1757

**TWILIGHT
AFTERHOURS** 10018-
105 St

URBAN LOUNGE 8111-
105 St, 439-3388

VICTORY LOUNGE
10030-102 St (down-
stairs), 428-1099

WUNDERBAR 8120-
101 St, 436-2286

X-WRECKS 10143-50
St, 466-8069

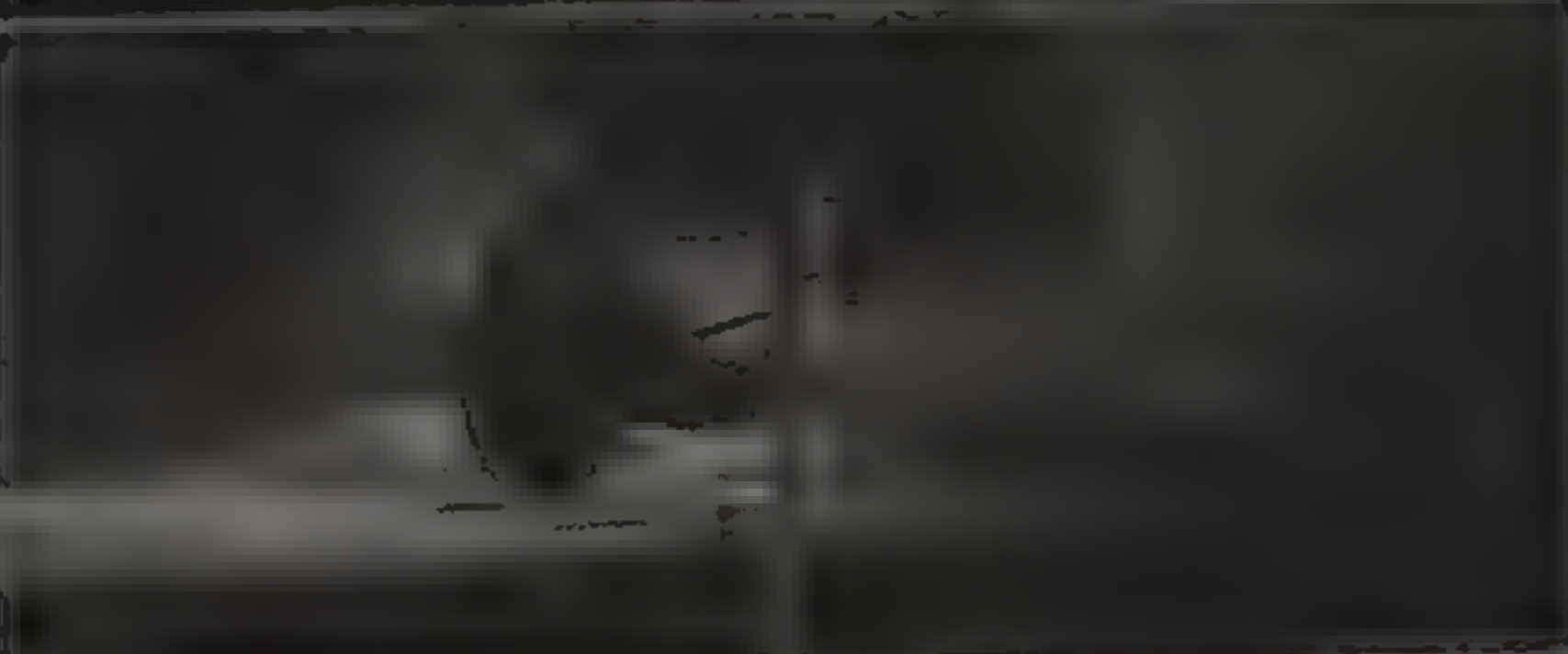
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102 St

THURS SEPT 1
BIG JOHN BATES
& THE VOODOO DOLLS
THE SQUAREHEADS
JukeBox Shock



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 AND WHERE EVERYTHING COUNTS
 IN LARGE AMOUNTS**

SUNDAY-SEPTEMBER 4th

WITH YOUR HOST
 DJ NAZZ NOMAD



MONDAYS
 LOUNGE: DJ Easy Grooves
 SUBURBS: Closed

TUESDAYS
 SUBURBS: BINGO! With DJ Dillinger
 and MC Freshyourside
 LOUNGE: Dominion with DJ Scott
 & guests Goth-Metal

WEDNESDAYS
 LOUNGE: DJ Skinny J & G-Wiz
 Glam-Punk-Indie
 SUBURBS: Closed unless there's a live show

THURSDAYS
 LOUNGE: Jesus & Anarchy Adam - Rub-a-Dub
 SUBURBS: Live Shows & Special Events

FRIDAYS
 LOUNGE: Jesus & Adam
 SUBURBS: Trashetaria
 DJ Texas Chainsaw Mascara and New City Crew
 Punk, classics, new shit, electro, etc. etc

SATURDAYS
 LOUNGE: Cool Out & Guests - Atmosphere
 SUBURBS: SATURDAY SUCKS!!
 DJ nik rofeelya & BlueJay

SUNDAYS
 Closed

SQUAD





http://trashetaria.saturdays.com

ELECTROSH

Tues. Sept. 13

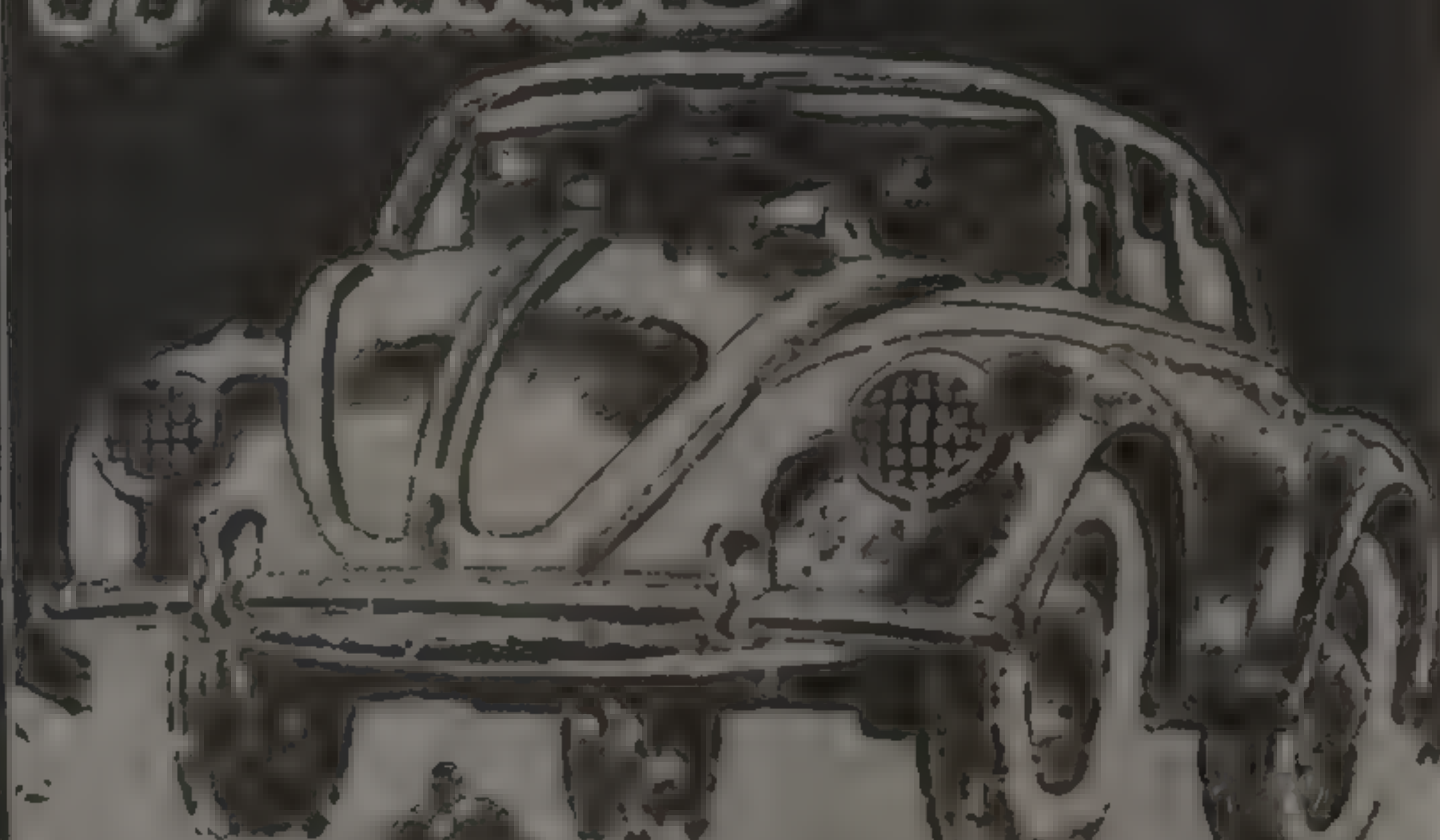
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THURS. SEPT 15


DIRTBOMBS

**THE JAMES
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NEW CITY

SUBURBS

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Sept 8 - The Inflation Kills
 (former Kitchens & Bathrooms)

Sept 21 - The Sights & Projektor

Sept 22 - DJ Peanut Butter Wolf

Sept 23 - Prom 9 From Outer Space

Sept 29 - Tricky Woo & C mon

Wed Nov 30 - DJ Andy Smith
 (from Portishead)

The Only way

Former Swollen Members artist Moka Only talks about the freedom of going solo

By DAVID BERRY

This isn't something I normally admit, but I've always thought that, on the off chance I decide to pursue a rap career as a semi-awkward, university-educated sub-suburbanite, I would go by the name "Prolific." It's a perfect rap name for a number of reasons: for starters, it's the type of name that, unlike, say, "Fiddy," screams underground: "Prolific" makes you think deep-rooted street poet with a razor-sharp wit and hellafied flow, not some glossy flosser with one hand on a gun and the other on a chalice.

Besides that, "Prolific" is pretty easy to shorten—"Pro," obviously, which is a pretty bad-ass name in itself—and both versions of the name have a damn-near inexhaustible supply of words that rhyme with them (off the top of my head: slick, sick, trick, terrific, mic, flow, go, throw, know, Joe... Heathrow...), such as to

make name-dropping myself rather easy in one of my laid-back underground jams, as produced by Madlib, or possibly Prefuse 73. Yeah, "Prolific" is definitely one sweet hot rap name.

It's a shame, then, that I really don't have any claim on calling myself prolific in the rap world: if anyone should take the name, it would have to be Vancouver's Moka Only, the six-foot-five, soul baritone

PREVIEW HIP HOP

rapper you've probably seen rapping across your screen on MuchMusic with B.C. group Swollen Members. Moka, or Only—whichever you prefer, really—is one damn prolific guy: since 1994, he's released over 15 solo albums alone, most independent, and done work in any number of other side-type groups, from the aforementioned Swollen Members to more underground acts like Code Name: Scorpion (with one of his Swollen partners, Prevail) and The Dominant Mammals; hell, he actually released three different solo albums all while winning three consecutive Junos with the Members.

"Yeah, I'm kind a record-a-holic," says Only, understating it a bit. "If I have some down time, or I'm not on

tour, I want to be recording every day. But, you know, the way I do it is kind of like a journal—it's like a diary, so I have to do it a lot."

IT JUST MIGHT BE that journal-type aspect that caused Moka to hang up one of his many hats this past year: after years of success with the Swollen Members, Moka called it quits with his partners Mad Child and Prevail and decided to go it his own way. Given the Members' rampant success, one would expect it would take some deep personal issues among the ranks to make somebody walk away, but Moka explains that, as could be expected by someone who does as much as him, Swollen Members was never a permanent thing.

"It was temporary from the beginning: I just really enjoy being alone, you know what I mean?" he says. "I had fun with the guys, there's no question with that, but that was just another era in my life. It was good—and Mad and Prev are going to continue on their own right now—but I think I got everything out of it that I was gonna get."

And so, now, he's off to get something on his own, with the release of yet another solo album, the soul- and jazz-tinged *The Desired Effect*. One of the best parts of the new



album, he explains, was not having to worry about other people shoe-horning in on his work; as a matter of fact, he had so much personal space for this one, he actually recorded most of it in his bedroom, where he recently set up a home studio.

"I don't like recording in big studios. It's sterile, like recording in a hospital: how do you get a good vibe out of recording in a sterile, hospital-like environment?" he says with a laugh. "Plus, there are different people there

every day—all these people who, you have no idea who they are, and they're viewing through the glass over the console; it's kind of like being in a cage. [The bedroom] is much better."

And you can only imagine how prolific he's going to be now that all he has to do to roll out of bed to make records. I still call dibs on the name, though. ☺

MOKA ONLY

Rum Jungle • Sat, May 27

death cab for cutie

IN STORES AUGUST 30TH



CAUTION: NOT FOR THE WEAK HEARTED!

GIGANTOUR

MEGADETH

ANTHRAX

FEAR FACTORY

The Dillinger Escape Plan

NOCTURNUS

LIFE OF AGONY

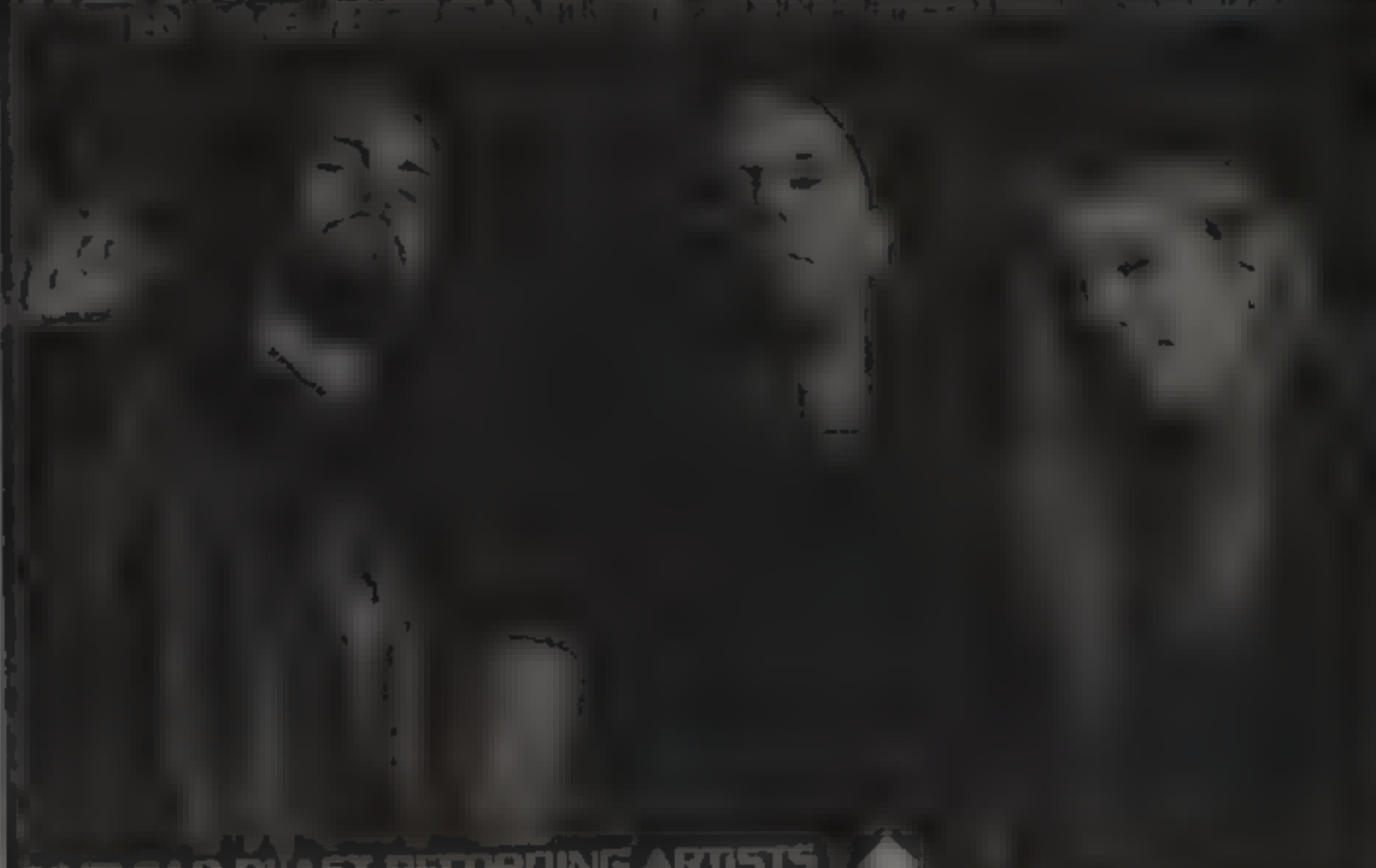
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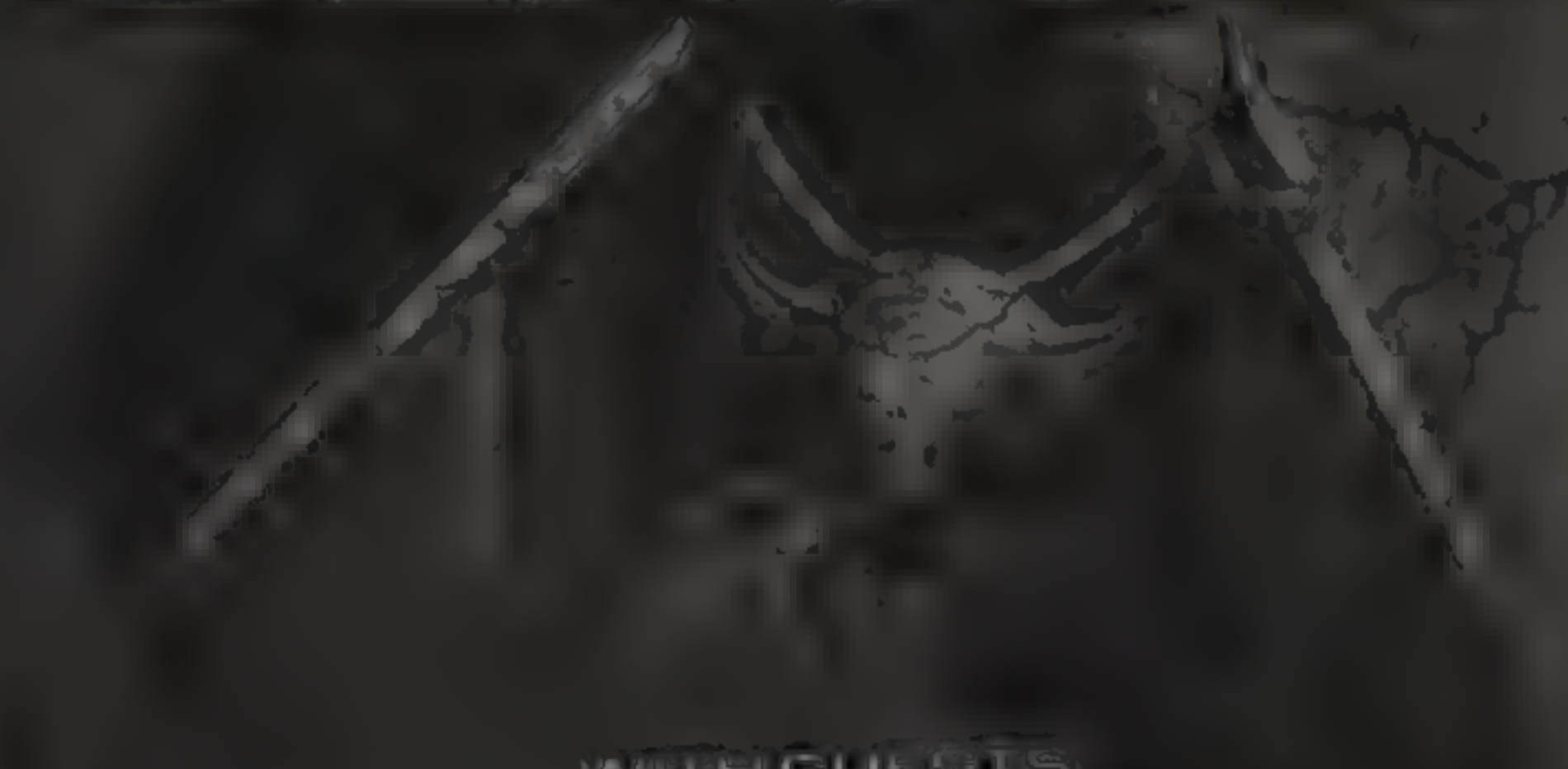
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Check out the big brain on Joel!

Singer-songwriter and U of A grad Joel Kroeker sheds some light on Canada's unique sound

By TYSON KABAN

Most people attend university to become doctors, lawyers and personal trainers; Joel Kroeker spent the better part of a decade studying to become a singer-songwriter. And though his Master's degree in Ethnomusicology has yet to come in handy when dealing with hecklers and flying beer bottles, his experience, specifically here in Edmonton, has proven to be well worth his time and the painful tuition fees.

"When I was at the U of A, I was actually writing my thesis on Canadian singer-songwriters," he says. "I interviewed hundreds of people and in the process I got to meet everybody in the Canadian industry—presidents of companies and labels. My thesis opened up a lot of doors for me, ones that I'd probably still be banging on today if it weren't for my research."

One of those doors was to the

office of Bernie Finkelstein, the president of True North Records, who signed Kroeker to the label and released his well-received debut, 2004's *Melodrama*. Like Cohen and Cockburn's work before him, the album's an extremely Canadian blend of jazz, rock, pop and folk. And, always the academic—no matter what he says to the contrary—Kroeker just completed an article on the Canadian tradition of self-deprecating, semi-tortured, yet insightful singer-songwriters and their place on

FOLK

the international stage.

"I just wrote a piece on what is the Canadian sound that's heard around the world," he explains. "Canada doesn't have a specific sound that say Cuba does, like its own style and tradition. But I think Canadian music is all about personality. I was just playing in Greece and they knew I was Canadian the minute I stepped on stage. Canada has a really strong history of singer-songwriters so I think people associate Canada with the winsome, overly apologetic singer-songwriter more so than anything else."

Like those afflicted Canadian

singer-songwriters that came before him, Kroeker writes directly from the soul. Without letting his large brain get in the way of his feelings and deepest thoughts, Kroeker says his songwriting might benefit from the structure his formal education gave him, but that's about it.

"I have studied a lot. I was in school for what seems like forever and I continue to learn more each day, but I think I have less and less of an academic perspective the more I do this," says Kroeker. "The more I try to write, I end up writing like how I think a little kid would write. The brain isn't where I write from anymore. I write from somewhere else. It's like peeking over the edge of a skyscraper for me, not being able to see things close up and making my own conclusions."

WHILE KROEKER usually performs his intimate ruminations (or "soul movements" as he uses to describe his songs) solo, he's got a four-piece band along for his latest tour. Taking a cue from the pioneers of Canadian singer-songwriting—at least, the ones that played before electricity had been invented—his drummer Shawn Killaly plays found objects and bassist Russell Scholberg rocks out on the saw. Kroeker admits tour-

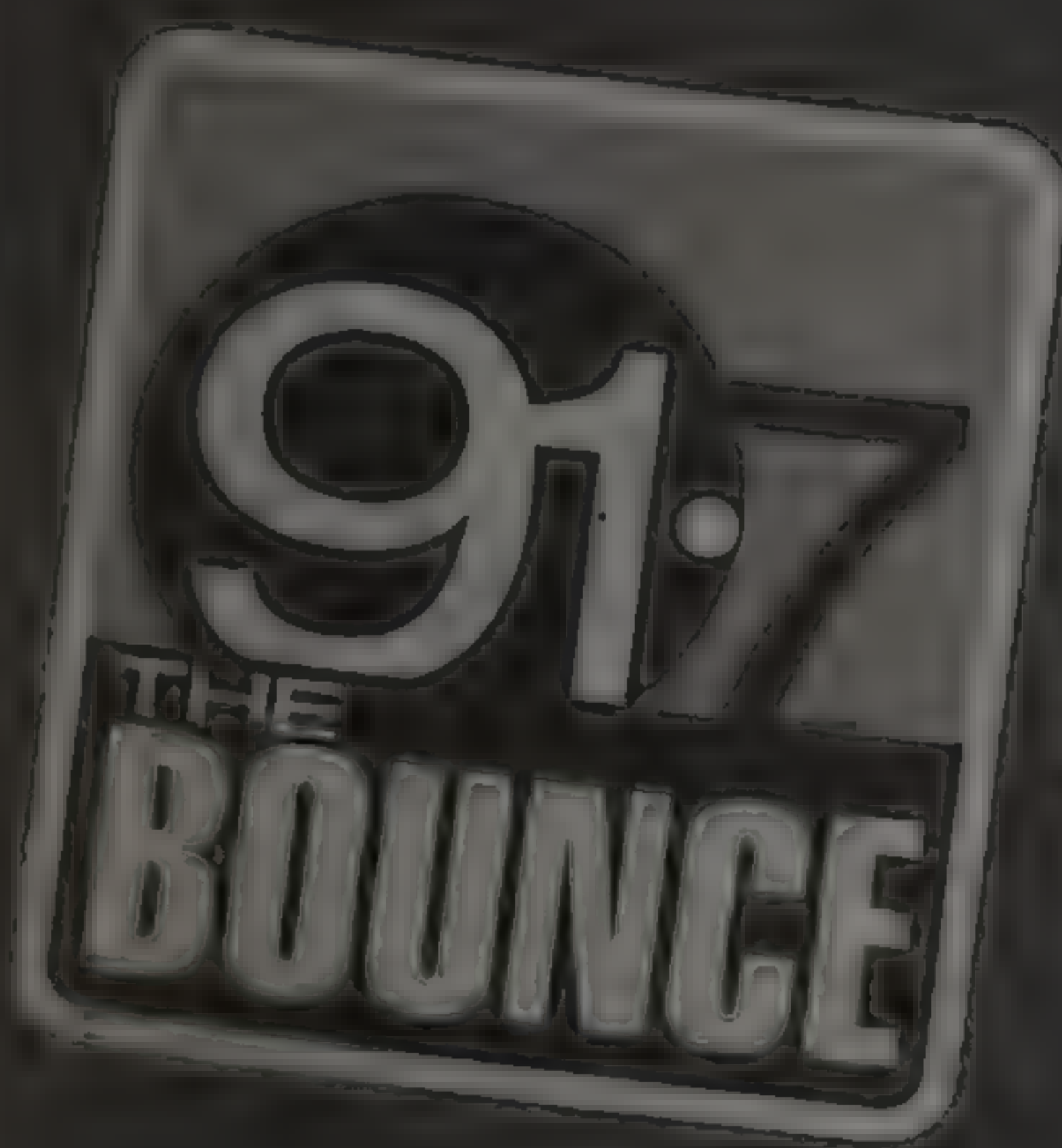
ing with three other guys has its moments and adds a new element to his show, but like every loner searching his soul for inspiration, some roads are better traveled alone.

"Touring with a band is almost impossible sometimes. The democracy of it is sort of crushing because I'm more of a fascist-type. I like to be in control," he says. "The things you can do with a four-piece band are obviously more interesting and it's a fuller sound. But it was only when I

started singing my own songs during my time in Edmonton that I realized exactly how far I could take myself as a singer-songwriter. It's obviously a lot of work, but I've never been more satisfied doing what I'm doing even if it's just me and my guitar, standing by ourselves in front of a crowd." ☐

JOEL KROEKER

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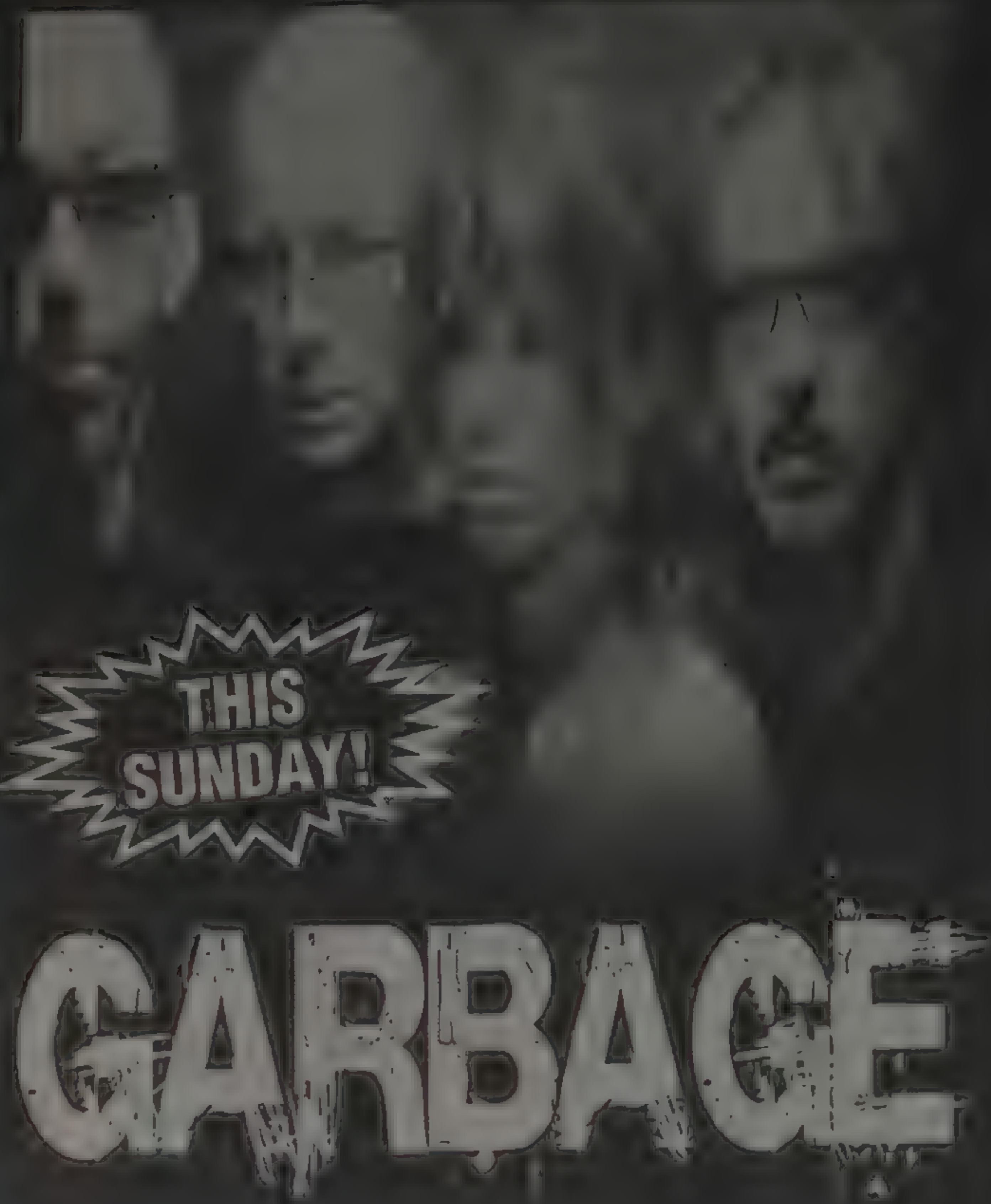
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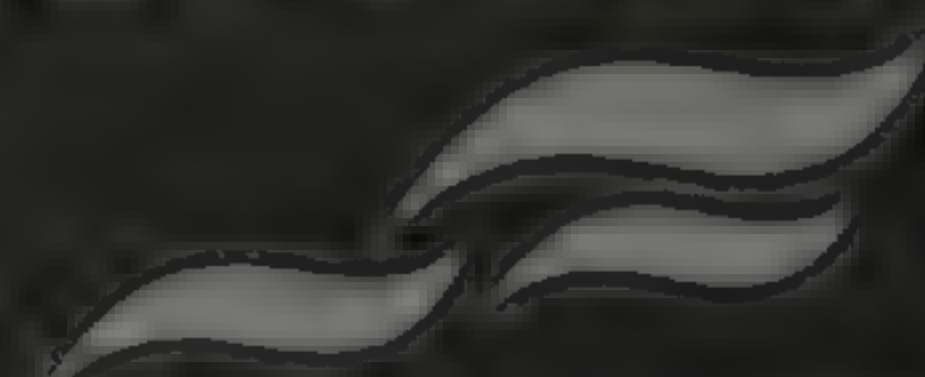
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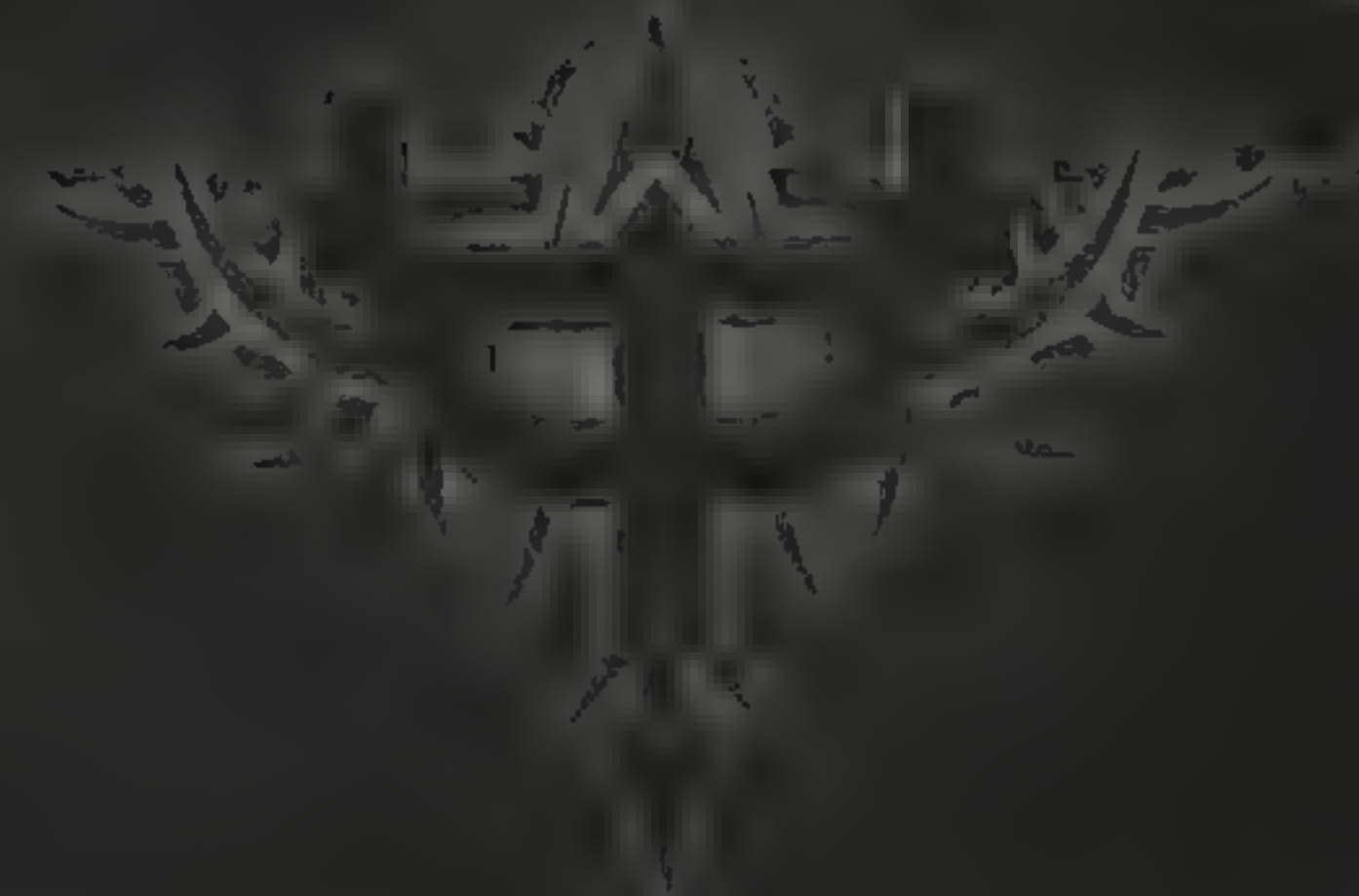
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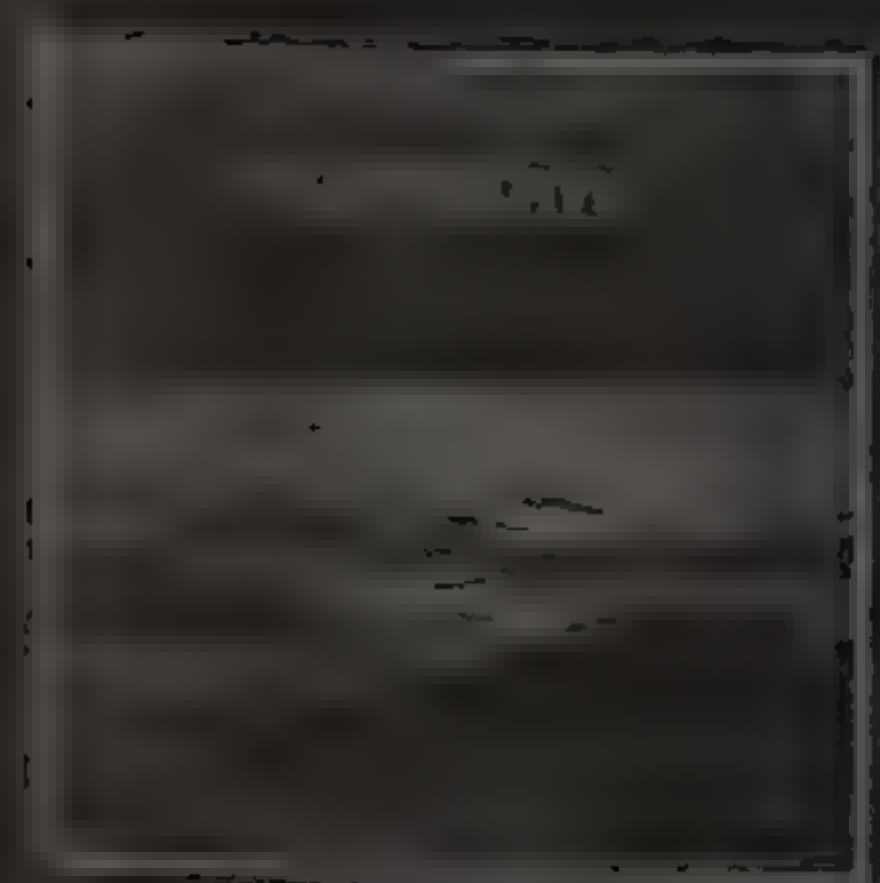
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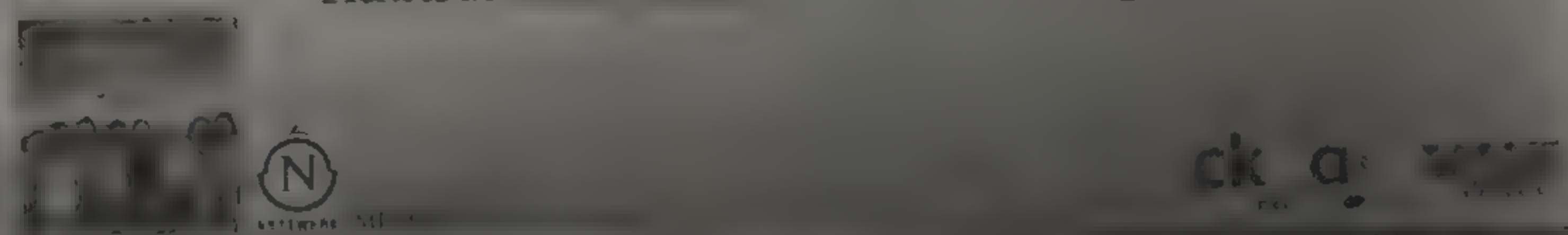
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distant replay

BY STEVEN SANDOR

THIS WEEK: Bryan Birtles discusses *Talking Heads: 77*

The first wave of New York City punk bands of the '70s can be split into two categories: those who looked the part—from the cross-dressing New York Dolls to the bangs and leather jackets of the Ramones—and those that looked rather unassuming and broke the punk ethic by actually knowing how to play their instruments. Groups like Television (whose *Marquee Moon* still reigns as a classic) and the Talking Heads fit into the latter category. Now, 30 years after those bands were formed, we scratch our heads and wonder if we ever should have called them punk bands at all.

For Bryan Birtles, guitarist for Edmonton's Mark Birtles Project, Talking Heads' crunchy 1977 debut (appropriately titled *Talking Heads: 77*) goes down as the album that most influenced his musical career. No, the Talking Heads were not an in-your-face kinda band—in fact, some of lead-man David Byrne's tunes on *Talking Heads: 77* come off as outright pop-friendly, like "Uh-Oh, Love Comes to Town" and "Psycho Killer," which became a minor hit, proving the band had crossover appeal. That crossover ability would bear fruit in the '80s, when the band's "Burning Down the House" became one of the biggest hits of the decade, turning the Talking Heads into an arena act. Byrne would eventually become a leader in world music, as well.

For Birtles, his first experience with *Talking Heads: 77* came when Mark Birtles Project co-founder Mark Raymond played the album for him when they were roommates at the now-burned-down Arlington Apartments. After hearing "Psycho Killer," Birtles was hooked.

"It was amazing," he recalls. "At the time, I was really getting sick of cookie-cutter punk songs that were about girls or love or smashing the state. Talking Heads didn't write songs like that. They proved you could write punk songs about anything you wanted and have them be interesting and relevant. A song like 'Don't Worry About the Government' is a good example. David Byrne sings about his

respect for hardworking civil servants by saying some of them are 'just like my loved ones.' His sincerity is unquestionable; this isn't an ironic backhand at the government.

"Other songs are even willing to deal with love but always with a minute detail instead of some all-encompassing song about it. All-encompassing songs always ring false to me because how could anyone have the audacity to claim they could understand a feeling. In *Talking Heads*, I'd found four musicians who seemed to agree with my thought that feelings were personal things and that it would take a lot of hubris to think an artist could explain them."

And as he learned more about the history of the band, Birtles gained more respect for the Talking Heads when he realized that Byrne and company were people who put the integrity of the music ahead of the punk fashion trends of the time.

"The more I learned about the band, the more I respected their individualism. On the back of *Talking Heads: 77* appears a picture of the four of them wearing button-down collars



and polo shirts. They looked more like university students than the Bowery punks they were.

"It must of taken a lot of guts to buck the punk fashion trend of the

time," he continues, "and nowadays with the 'punk uniform' fully entrenched, I was inspired to see a band that was undeniably there at the beginning saying what I'd always believed: that punk rock was about doing what you wanted, wearing what you wanted and being who you wanted. I guess ultimately the biggest influence it had on me was to prove that anybody could start a punk band. When I heard it for the first time the music seemed so simple, the lyrics were personal and not lame, and the band itself refused to be pigeonholed into some lousy punk-rock stereotype."

Like the Talking Heads, the Mark Birtles Project has defied stereotypes; the band's mix of musical elements found on its newly-released second EP, *Urgency! Urgency! Emergency!!* has made them not only a favourite on the Edmonton scene, but has earned the group a profile across the country as well. ☺

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NEW SOUNDS

NEW BUFFALO
THE LAST BEAUTIFUL DAY
(ARTS & CRAFTS)

New Buffalo is the work of Australian songwriter Sally Seltsman, and she is firmly at the helm of *The Last Beautiful Day* (although Beth Orton and Dirty Three's Jim White do turn up to help out). The sound is something unique, with layer after layer of samples mixed with live instruments and vocals. If Sunday morning had a sound, this would be it: calm and relaxing, but with something monumental about it.

Despite the use of samples, the songs sound neither programmed nor patched together; the music lives and breathes as an organic whole. Likewise, the multiple layers in the mix do nothing to clutter up the music; Seltsman leaves plenty of breathing room all around. There is a feeling of contentment throughout the disc, with carnival-like organs pumping out infectiously trippy grooves for Seltsman to weave her tender, wavering vocals into. Much of the album inhabits the same dream-

like soundscape, but this is the kind of stuff that you put on when you're in a particular mood anyway, so that's a reassuring quality. And, while Seltsman takes her sweet time working through the tracks, this isn't middle of the road material. Many of the songs have a quiet contemplation about them, as in "Yes," when she sings "Yes, I get the feeling that you're tired of all my moody ways/I'm tired of living moody days." *The Last Beautiful Day* offers an opportunity to explore the ebb and flow of the music within, and it's a lovely experience. ★★★★★ —EDEN MUNRO

OXES
OXES
(MONITOR)

It's happened to all of us. We've had hamburgers that are missing the one condiment we enjoy above all; we've eaten entrées that could use more spice; we have had desserts served without the cherry on top.

The new EP by Baltimore-based experimental punks Oxes is a lot like

that. Right from the get-go, this collection of five gut-busting instrumentals feels like it's missing something. Yes, there are plenty of crunchy guitar bits, the odd effect or two, and plenty of oomph coming from the drum kit. In the past, Oxes have been unfortunately labeled with the awful "math rock" tag, but this new EP proves that, more than anything else, they are punks at heart, wanting to turn the guitars way up and annoy the neighbours.

And maybe that's the rub. Because this comes off as a such a punk-driven effort, maybe it doesn't work as well as it would if the band actually threw in some vocals. Maybe a scream or two. Or could it be that there are no song titles to be found on the CD inlay card? Maybe I'm silly and need the play-by-play as the songs go by. Maybe I don't like calling songs "Untitled track one" and "Untitled track five." I guess, considering how stripped-down this effort is, I just want Oxes to treat their work a little more like a traditional rock record.

But, like a lot of hamburgers that are missing one condiment, Oxes' missing elements aren't severe enough to bring the whole project down. In the end, it's still pretty darn tasty. ★★★ —STEVEN SANDOR

ALICE COOPER
DIRTY DIAMONDS
(NEW WEST)

When you want to hear a song about a truck driver locked up in a Texas jail wearing his sister's wedding dress, who do you turn to? Really, there's only one man for that job: Alice Cooper. And

with "The Saga of Jesse Jane," the Coop manages to fill that long forgotten niche with a country song done up with his best Johnny Cash impression, and the result is mighty enjoyable.

Dirty Diamonds is a throwback to the Detroit garage rock that Cooper plied in the early '70s when Alice was still a band rather than a solo artist, and the album features some of his best work since the original group split. The title track is a Stooges-like attack featuring some cool Dragnet-inspired horns, and "You Make Me Wanna" is the best background "woo-hoos" since the Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil." The band is scorching, too, with a sound that doesn't rely on an overload of distortion. They go for melody and groove instead of crunch, and it works tremendously. Cooper wrote and recorded the album with these guys, making this a more organic effort than a lot of his recent work.

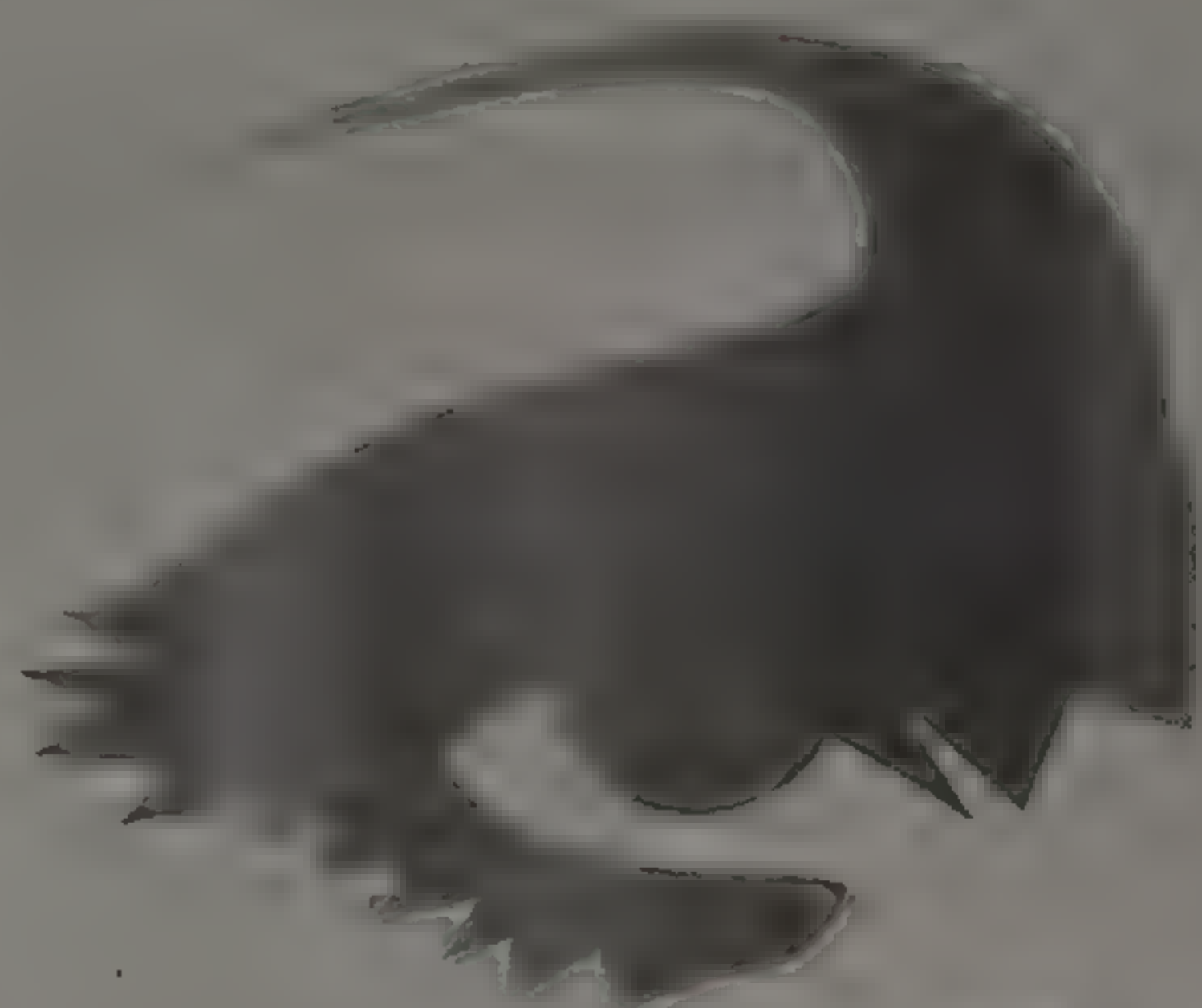
There are a few clunkers that weigh the album down (the generic hard rock of "Run Down the Devil" and "Stand," a truly lame collaboration with rapper Xzibit), but there's plenty more good than bad to be heard. Who'd have figured that Cooper would start playing rock 'n' roll again this late in the game? ★★★★★ —EDEN MUNRO

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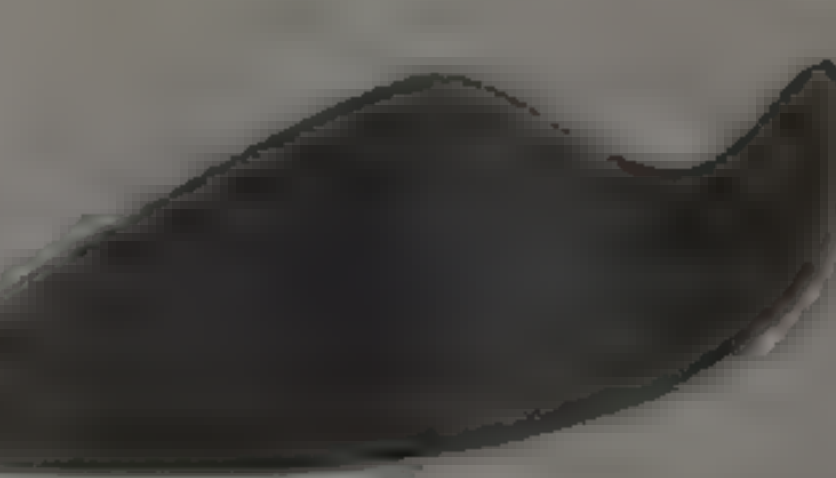
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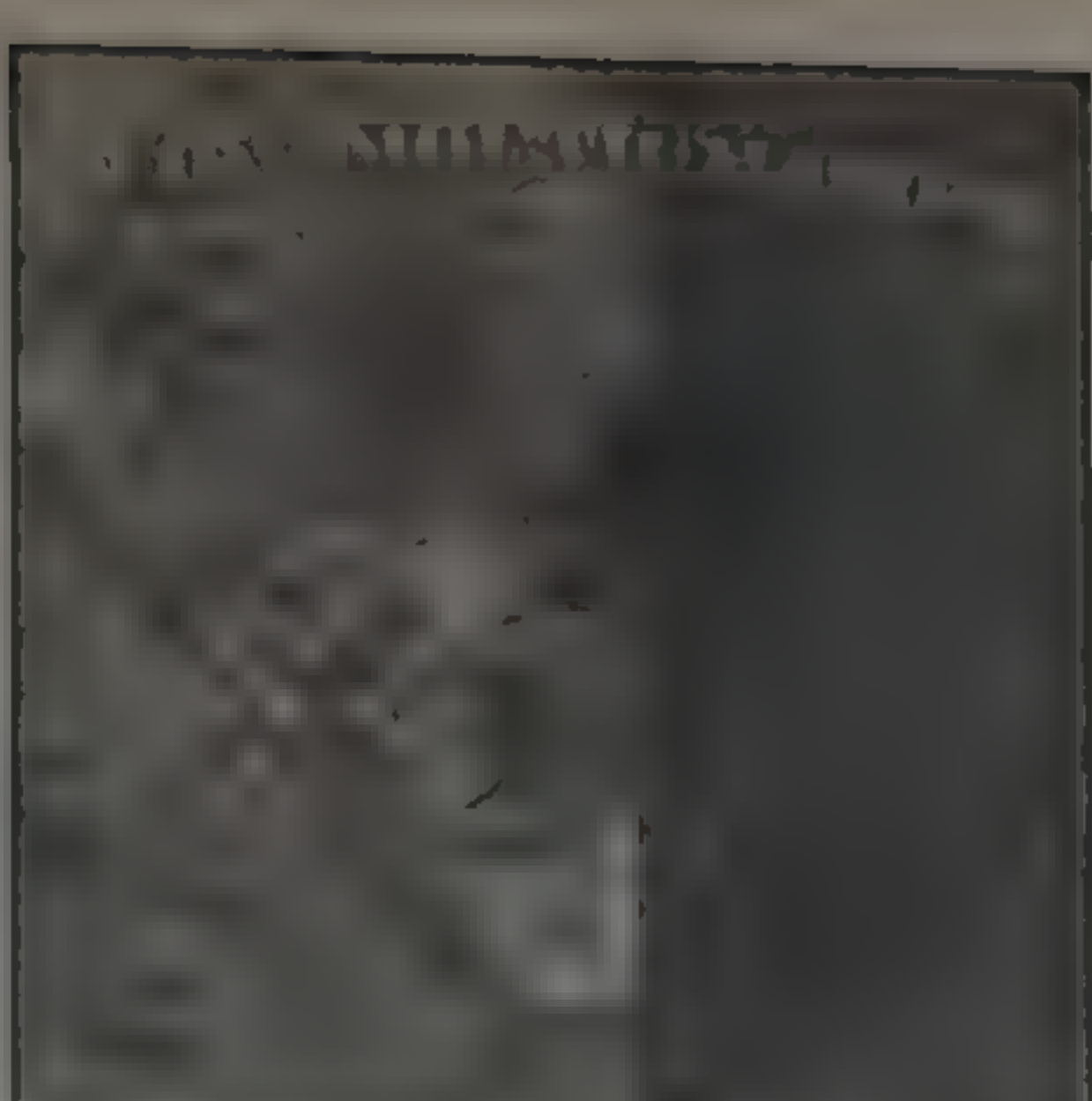
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"Oh yeah? What are they called?"

"The Strokes. I think they're from New York or something. Anyway, they're really quite good, don't you think?"

"Yeah, I very much like their singer's disaffected, too-cool-for-school vocals and their serpentine guitar licks."

"Totally! I also dig their drummer's incessant high-hat rolls and vaguely disco-esque back beats."

"For sure... Say, Gary, I thought just occurred to me... since these 'Strokes' will probably remain obscure, perhaps we could take some of their ideas, dumb them down a shade, and then use them to start our own band!"

"Gary... isn't that a little, I dunno, dishonest?"

"Perhaps, perhaps—but if we do it with enough irony and detachment, people will love it. We'll give our songs names like 'Hey, Scenester!' and stop washing our hair, just to drive home how ironic and post-modern we are!"

"I love it, Gary! And so will everyone else! No one will ever dream we got all of our ideas from this cute little American band... the Strokes, was it?"

"The Strokes."

"Yeah? Oh well... Now, let's find ourselves a mop-topped drummer and some cool vintage clothes and get on with it!" ★★ —ROSS MOROZ

THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND AMERICAN UNIVERSITY 12/13/70 (SANCTUARY)

This has got to be somewhere around the 10th live album from the Allman Brothers Band; I'm not sure of the exact number, because they have an awful lot of them. The vast amount of live releases might seem redundant, but that's only if you come to them looking for a

fix of Classic Rock. While "Ramblin' Man" is a staple of rock radio, it's never been particularly indicative of what the Allmans do. It's better to approach the music from the same angle that jazz fans take: there's more to a song than simply getting to the chorus. The journey from beginning to end is just as important. What makes the Allmans special, though, is not their willingness to stretch songs out and try new things so much as their ability to do it well.

That leads us to the band's latest archival release, *American University 12/13/70*. Though known primarily as a jam band, the first three tracks do little to encourage this reputation, being fairly standard performances. "Stormy Monday" shows some sparks, but they're doused by an unfortunate fade out in the middle of a soulful slide solo from the late Duane Allman. The final two songs make up for earlier deficiencies, though; "You Don't Love Me" and "Whippin' Post" clock in at 15 and 20 minutes, respectively, and offer plenty of opportunities for the whole band to shine.

American University is certainly not indispensable for the casual fan, but it does provide a glimpse into the growth of the Allmans for those willing to take the trip. ★★ —EDEN MUNRO

WIDE MOUTH MASON SHOT DOWN SATELLITES (UNIVERSAL)

We were having a discussion here at the *Vue* offices just this afternoon about the unbelievably positive state of Canadian music these days. Long derided for the depths of its utter suckiness, Can-rock is in the middle of a full-blown renaissance, and those of us who can remember the days when acts like Edwin and David

Usher were considered bona-fide rock icons are nothing short of amazed to see our home and native land going bonkers over the likes of Death From Above 1979 and the Arcade Fire. It makes you wonder where the former giants of Can-rock got off to—you know, the bland, inoffensive, Juno-winning wankers who once ruled the airwaves?

China, apparently. At least in the case of Wide Mouth Mason. It turns out these denizens of palatable if forgettable prairie rock have been filling rooms on the dreary side of the Great Wall ever since the Chinese government allowed them to play there in the late '90s, and while they haven't released an album in Canada since 2000's *Stew*, in the interim WMM has put out two greatest hits packages in the Peoples' Republic. Their latest original offering, *Shot Down Satellites*, gets its Canadian release next week, and it's pretty clear that the Great White North is old news for these oriental superstars. *Shot Down Satellites* is so completely middle-of-the-road, so entirely devoid of any substance or creativity, so slickly polished and cynically presented, only a society lacking all knowledge of the last 50 years of western culture could possibly find anything worth listening to among the album's collection of sappy ballads, Kim Mitchell-esque feel-good "rockers" and limp blues licks. Not that Wide Mouth Mason should really care what the reviewers of the first-world have to say about *Shot Down Satellites*: there's a captive audience of a billion people waiting to have this record crammed down their gullets, so Canada's paltry 30 million Stars and K-Os fans probably don't really cause Earl, Shaun and Safwan to lose a whole lot of sleep. —ROSS MOROZ

—ROSS MOROZ

haiku QUICK SPINS

BY WHITEY
AND T.B. PLAYER

- Just Your Day Job
Sweet a We Got a Problem (Bad Taste)
Sweet a We Got a Problem (Bad Taste)
Sweet a We Got a Problem (Bad Taste)
- Treva Whatever
Treva Whatever (Ninja Tune)
Treva Whatever (Ninja Tune)
Treva Whatever (Ninja Tune)
- How Nerve Action
How Nerve Action (indie)
How Nerve Action (indie)
How Nerve Action (indie)

- Marjorie Fair
Self Help Serenade (Capitol)
Self Help Serenade (Capitol)
Self Help Serenade (Capitol)
- Broken Spindles
Inside/Absent (Saddle Creek)
Inside/Absent (Saddle Creek)
Inside/Absent (Saddle Creek)
- Gang Gang Dance
Hillulah (Social Registry)
Hillulah (Social Registry)
Hillulah (Social Registry)
- The American Analog Set
Set Free (Arts & Crafts)
Set Free (Arts & Crafts)
Set Free (Arts & Crafts)

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Very Uplifting

The Araki insurgency

Bad-boy director Gregg Araki grows up with haunting *Mysterious Skin*

By PAUL MATWYCHUK

The characters in Gregg Araki's new film *Mysterious Skin* include a predatory, pedophilic Little League coach, an emotionally damaged teenaged boy who's convinced he was abducted by a UFO when he was eight years old, another emotionally damaged teenaged boy who becomes a gay hustler, and that boy's sad, desperate middle-aged Johns. While there are moments of great beauty in it, the film is also painful, haunting and upsetting in its portrayal of the aftereffects of child sexual abuse. Araki doesn't shy away from including some fairly graphic scenes of gay male sex, as well as a brutal scene in which Neil, the male prostitute, gets beaten up by one of his "dates."

In other words, *Mysterious Skin* is not exactly what you'd call typical multiplex fare, which is why Araki—the bad-boy director whose nihilistic, outrageously campy, often juvenile films *The Doom Generation*, *The Living End* and *Totally F***ed Up* put him in the vanguard of the "New Queer Cinema" movement of the early '90s—is a little amazed that people are calling it his most accessible film yet. "It's hardly what I was expecting would happen when I set out to make it," Araki says via e-mail from the Los Angeles offices of Desperate Pictures, his production company. (True to his in-your-face directing style, he's an all-capper.) "At screenings, I've had my usual devoted *Doom Generation/Nowhere* fans coming up to me telling me how much they love the film, but also grandmothers in their 60s, super-hetero Mormon guys, women of all age ranges and walks of life. I think the film really touches a universal chord, and despite some tough scenes and challenging subject matter, people really relate to the emotional journey the film takes you on."

An adaptation of Scott Heim's acclaimed 1995 novel, *Mysterious Skin* has many of the hallmarks of Araki's past work: a casual, matter-of-fact approach to gay sexuality; an affection for trashy pop culture artifacts (the film opens with an image of a boy smiling rapturously as Froot Loops rain down on his face); a fondness for casting TV sitcom stars in unexpected, image-subverting roles. But there's a new seriousness to Araki's filmmaking—the characters aren't cartoons this time out, but complicated, multi-layered, suffering human

beings, and the presence of Joseph Gordon-Levitt (best-known until now as one of the aliens on *3rd Rock From the Sun*) in the pivotal role of Neil is no smirky stunt, like the cameos by Lauren Tewes and Christopher Knight in *The Doom Generation*. On the contrary, Gordon-Levitt gives an astonishingly rich, subtle, charismatic performance that conveys the pain Neil has carried around with him for half his life without reducing him to a one-dimensional victim. There's an extraordinary scene between Neil and a lesion-covered John (played with exquisite delicacy by veteran character actor Billy Drago) that displays a level of tenderness and emotional intimacy you'd never have guessed either Gordon-Levitt or Araki was capable of.

Here's the rest of my conversation with Gregg Araki.

Vue Weekly: When you read Scott Heim's novel, did you immediately know you wanted to make a movie out of it? Did you have a clear vision of how you could adapt it, or were there scenes that you really had no idea how you'd translate them to film?

Gregg Araki: I first read Scott's novel back in 1995, but it took me several years to figure out a way to actually make it into a film. It was imperative to me that the child actors playing eight-year-old Brian and Neil be protected from the adult content and subject matter—but at the same time, those scenes with the young boys are crucial to the cumulative emotional impact of the story. After experimenting with subjective camera and point-of-view in other projects, I was able to devise a strategy using point-of-view camera, careful editing and storyboards that could get me the

shots I needed without the young boys having to know what the story was about. (Their parents, of course, had read the whole script and I discussed how the scenes would be shot in detail with them.) So the young actors, Chase Ellison and George Webster, were able to perform their scenes, emotional beat to emotional beat, without really knowing the full story. Chase and George had separate scripts with them which allowed me to get the shots I needed. It never ceases to amaze me how natural and nuanced the young boys' performances are—especially since I know, as the director who was there on set, that they don't even know what they're reacting to.

VW: What do you think is the most significant thing your involvement added to the story? What part

PROFILE INDIE

of the novel did it pain you the most to have to leave out?

GA: The film is, of course, tighter and the action is more compressed than the novel, which has more time to ramble and develop characters and situations. But it's very, very faithful to the book and I really wanted to preserve as much of the incredible story that Scott created as possible. In a weird way, the story is almost ideally suited to the directness and intimacy of the cinematic medium. The power of the novel is that it is told in a series of first-person accounts of what Brian and Neil go through, and in that subjectivity, it sheds a light on a world you could never even imagine. In the past, most clichéd "TV-movie" depictions of this subject would show a shot of a closing door and violins playing on the soundtrack just as the abuse starts to happen. But *Mysterious Skin* puts the audience in the place of the kids—we see the world and all that happens through their eyes. That's what makes it so devastating—just as the young protagonists are powerless over the events that happen, the audience sitting there in the dark is also in a similar state of emotional vulnerability.

VW: You edited the film as well, and you've given it some very unusual, "soft" editing rhythms. I don't know how to describe it technically, but it's as though, when you cut from Neil's storyline to Brian's storyline, you pause and take a little breath first before gently switching over. Am I imagining things, or is that an effect you were con-

sciously trying to achieve?

GA: The melancholy, measured pacing and style were all really straight out of the book, and my number-one priority was always to be faithful and true to Scott's original vision—the contrast between the aesthetic beauty of how the book was written and the darkness of the subject matter is what makes the novel so riveting. So I told my DP and my designers that I wanted *Mysterious Skin* to be "the most beautiful film ever made." All the imagery is very carefully lit, composed, colour-designed, edited, et cetera. Plus there's the unbelievably gorgeous score composed by ambient legend Harold Budd and ex-Cocteau Twin Robin Guthrie. So the movie becomes this dreamy, otherworldly experience—like a great Wong Kar-Wai or Terrence Malick film.

VW: It seems appropriate to set this story in the '80s; in the present day, UFO abductions just don't seem as potent or scary a cultural image compared to 15 or 20 years ago when all those Whitley Streiber books were on the bestseller lists. Are alien abductions no longer a resonant metaphor for our collective fears?

GA: I think they're a beautiful metaphor for that kind of powerless feeling one has when something much larger than oneself just takes over. That's why the scene with little

Brian on the roof staring up at the UFO is one of my favourite scenes in the film. It's like a visualization of this huge, monumental thing totally dominating and taking over little Brian's entire life. We purposefully designed the UFO so it would look like a kind of cheesy "flying saucer"—the kind of spaceship an eight-year-old boy would conjure up in his imagination. I love the way it's so gigantic and he's so small and helpless—it's a great pictorial representation of what's going on with Brian psychologically.

VW: Do you think of your depiction of the Little League coach as "sympathetic"? His behaviour is obviously very predatory, but there's something haunting about Bill Sage's performance that makes it hard to simply write him off as nothing more than a monster.

GA: Bill Sage does a phenomenal job with an obviously very difficult role. One of the things I love most about the book is the way Scott gives depth and humanity to all the characters—the coach, the tricks Neil sleeps with, even the smallest supporting characters are real human beings with flaws, insecurities and human frailties. That makes *Mysterious Skin* so much richer and truthful and powerful than if it were a simplistic tale of black-and-white good guys and bad guys. Estimates run as high as one in four children are victims of sexual abuse. One in four! And the way that abuse happens is exactly how it's presented in the film—it's not some creepy monster in a van that snatches your kid at a playground. It's someone the kid knows and trusts—a coach, uncle, stepfather, priest. People want to pretend this kind of abuse doesn't exist. Well, sadly, it does exist and it happens every day, all over the world. Unfortunately there are no easy solutions to this problem, but at least the film sheds a light on the subject and lets people talk about it. ♡

MYSTERIOUS SKIN

Written and directed by Gregg Araki •
Starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt
Brady Corbet and Michelle
Trachtenberg • Opens
Fri, Aug 26



PRINCESS THEATRE
10337 - Whyte Ave. - 433-0728

THE WILD PARROTS OF TELEGRAPH HILL (G)
NIGHTLY 7:15 & 9:15 PM • SAT & SUN MAT 1:30 PM

WEDNESDAY AUG 31 - THURSDAY SEPT 1
NIGHTLY 7:15 PM

MYSTERIOUS SKIN
(R) (SEVERAL SHORTS) (DISTURBING SOME CONTENT)
NIGHTLY 7:00 & 9:00 PM • SAT & SUN MAT 1:15 PM

PRINCESS THEATRE
10337 - Whyte Ave. - 433-0728

LADIES IN LAVENDER
(RATED PG)
SAT & SUN MATINEE ONLY 3:00 PM

MAD HOT BALLROOM
(RATED PG)
SAT & SUN MATINEE ONLY 3:15 PM



Unearthing the truth

Director Fernando Meirelles digs up a well-crafted film with *The Constant Gardener*

By JOSEF BRAUN

Only minutes into *The Constant Gardener*, Tessa (Rachel Weisz), the most vibrant character in the film, is pronounced dead, her body found slain in some desolate corner of Northern Kenya. Her husband Justin (Ralph Fiennes), a British diplomat, is given the news with bloodless tact while watering plants in his office, swiftly followed by comments sharply implying that Tessa may have been unfaithful to him. It is only after their young marriage is cut short so brutally that Justin begins to sus-

pect that Tessa was not the woman he thought she was. His suspicions turn out to be true, though not in the ways he initially presumes. Tessa's death gives rise to revelations that allow Justin to fall in love with her in a way he never managed while she was alive, and furthermore, this love gives an entirely unexpected purpose to his life.

That gives you some idea of what *The Constant Gardener* is all about, yet in terms of the grand scheme, it somehow tells you very little.

REVUE THRILLER

Though always in the foreground, the posthumous love affair between Tessa and Justin is only the personal aspect of a political thriller with a broad canvas, a thoroughly damning tale that neatly outlines how corporate irresponsibility leads to human tragedy, or more specifically, how big pharmaceutical companies foster a system of product development that allows them to use impoverished Africans as unknowing guinea pigs.

The beauty of *The Constant Gardener*, a well-crafted movie for a (hopefully) wide audience, lies in its impressive set of balanced elements. Adapted by Jeffrey Caine (*Goldeneye*) from John le Carré's novel, the balance of the personal and the political is constantly busy at work here, the micro and the macro helping the dartingly elliptical narrative unfold in engrossing counterpoint. There are ways in which one aspect brings out otherwise unseen details in the other, and there's a moral point in this juxtaposition which shows us the faces of all involved, for the most part making those faces mean something. Not every peripheral character is fully fleshed out, and some (like Danny Huston's) are in danger of being too much a type, but each is acknowledged and examined sufficiently to make us understand how many links are in the chain that separates well-fed bureau-

crats from the starving masses they ultimately deem as expendable.

BUT MAYBE the most memorable balance in *The Constant Gardener* is the one struck between the film's star and its director, Fernando Meirelles, the Brazilian who helmed the international hit *City of God*. While some actors embody the repressed dynamics of their directors, the tension between Fiennes and Meirelles has the opposite effect: Meirelles speeds things up and jolts his audience with more style, purpose and confidence than most of his peers, primarily through thoughtful use of rack focus, jarring hand-held camera and super-saturated colours (courtesy of cinematographer César Charlone) and a singular, unflinching eye for brutality and poverty. These sensibilities could not be more in contrast with the sort of performance Fiennes delivers as this passive career diplomat forced into action, a performance of contained confusion and emotional impotence.

Yet despite his reserve, Fiennes never has a dead moment on screen; he reveals precisely the right amount of bottled-up feelings or ideas, just enough quiver or pause for the camera to register without alarming the other characters. Though understated, his emotional life is never remote from Meirelles's gaze, and the result is that Fiennes disrupts Meirelles's instincts brilliantly, forcing him to hold a moment longer than he would have otherwise, opening a direct line between actor and audience. Fiennes makes Meirelles slow down and listen, and together the two find electric, vividly human moments that help make *The Constant Gardener* an experience that sticks with you long after it's done.

THE CONSTANT GARDENER
Directed by Fernando Meirelles • Written by Jeffrey Caine • Starring Ralph Fiennes, Rachel Weisz and Danny Huston • Opens Fri, Aug 26

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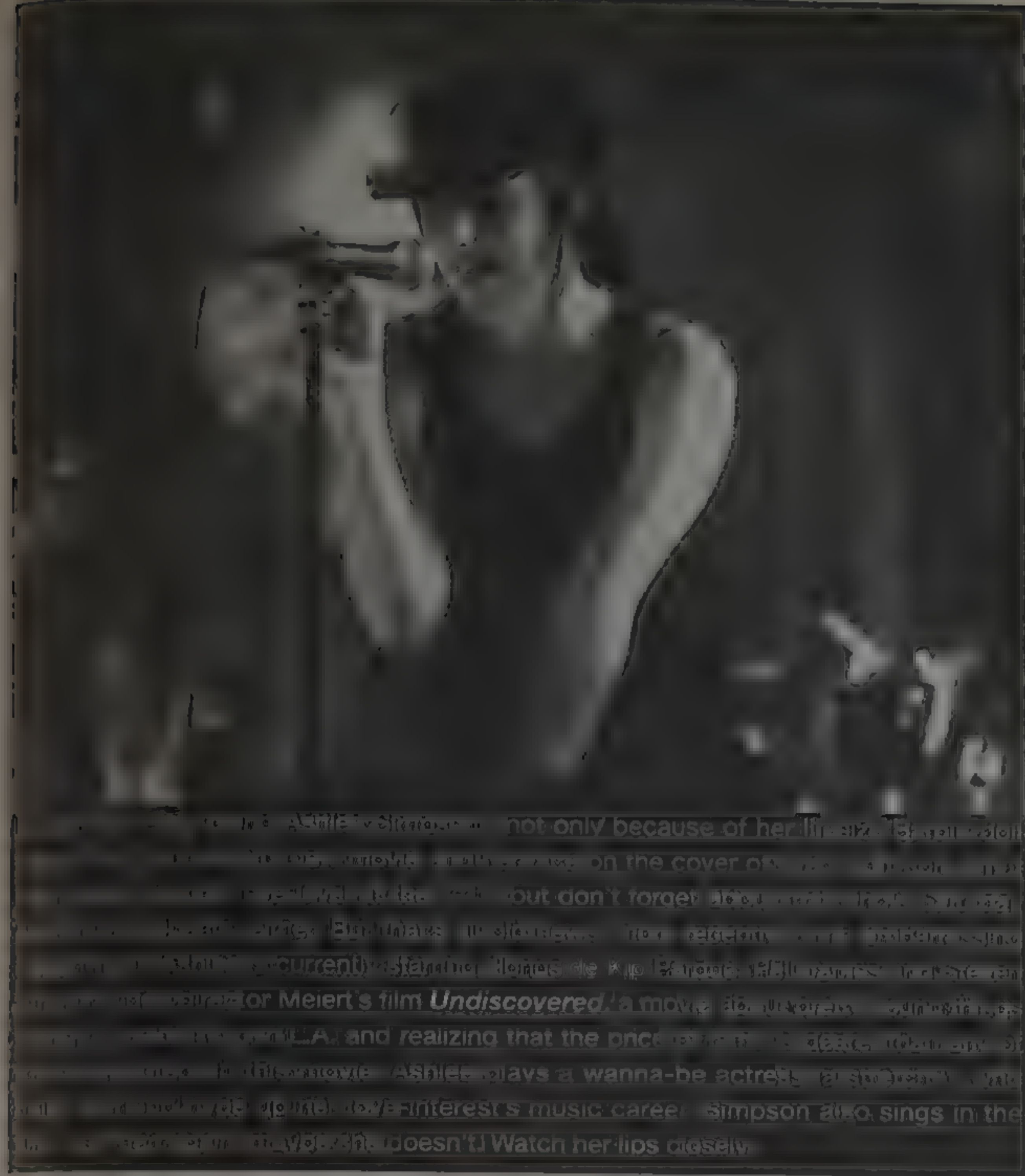
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•18A+ sexual content

WEDNESDAY AUG 31 - THURSDAY SEPT 1
THE CONSTANT GARDENER
NIGHTLY 7:00 PM • SAT/SUN, SEPT 1 MAT 2 PM
•14A+ coarse language, mature themes



FILM WEEKLY

THIS WEEK'S
NEW MOVIES

The Brothers Grimm Matt Damon, Heath Ledger, Lena Headey and Bruce McEwan star in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* director Terry Gilliam's action-adventure tale about the legendary folklore-collecting, con-artist brothers who travel the German countryside pretending to protect villagers from supernatural creatures and performing exorcisms, until the day they are brought in as experts to face a real curse which requires real courage.

The Cave Cole Hauser, Morris Chestnut, Lena Headey and Eddie Cibrian star in first-time director Bruce Hunt's thriller in which a team of American spelunkers descend into mile-deep caverns in Romania to uncover a unique ecosystem in the massive cave system, only to have their mission goes haywire when they discover an unknown species of predator.

The Constant Gardener Ralph Fiennes, Rachel Weisz, Danny Huston and Daniel Harford star in *City of God* director Fernando Mierelles's spy thriller about a British woman who is murdered in Northern Kenya, causing her staid diplomat husband to try to uncover the truth about their life together and the enemies she gained through her radical lifestyle, putting his own life on the line. Opening Wed, Aug 31. Read Josef Braun's review on page 32.

Hustle & Flow Terrance Howard, Anthony Anderson, Ludacris and Taryn Manning star in *Water's Edge* writer/director Craig Brewer's rags-to-riches film in which a small-time Memphis hustler realizes at 40 that his life is at a dead-end and that he must finally try to fulfil his dreams of breaking out of the hood by pulling off his biggest hustle when a hip-hop maven rolls through town.

Last Days Michael Pitt, Lukas Haas, Asia Argento and Kim Gordon star in *Elephant* director Gus Van Sant's film about the last few days of a Seattle musician reminiscent of the late Kurt Cobain, who spirals deeper into depression and drug addiction until he concludes that there is only one way out. Read Josef Braun's review on page 31.

Mysterious Skin Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Brady Corbet, Elisabeth Shue and Bill Sage star in *The Doom Generation* director Gregg Araki's coming-of-age film based on the book by Scott Heim in which two very different small-town teenagers, one a hustler and the other who believes he is and alien seductee, must come to terms with the same childhood trauma in order to move on with life. Read Paul Matwychuk's article on page 30.

FILM LISTINGS

Showtimes for Friday, Aug 28 to Thursday, Sept. 4

All showtimes are subject to change at any time. Please contact theatre for confirmation.

CINEMA AT THE CENTRE

Stanley A. Milner Library Theatre, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Square 496-7070

MUSIC FOR A BLUE TRAIN (14A, coarse language) Sun 2:00

CITY CENTRE

10200-102 Ave 421-7020

THE BROTHERS GRIMM (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 12:30 3:30 6:30, 9:30

UNDISCOVERED (PG) Daily 12:20 2:40 5:00 7:50 10:15

THE CAVE (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 12:40 3:00 5:15 7:40 10:15

RED EYE (PG, violence, not recommended for young children) Daily 12:10 2:30 4:45 7:20 9:40

THE 40 YEAR-OLD VIRGIN (18A, coarse language, sexual content) Daily 12:50 3:50 7:00 9:50

THE SKELETON KEY (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 1:20 4:10 7:30 10:20

BROKEN FLOWERS (14A) Daily 1:00 4:00 6:50 9:20

WEDDING CRASHERS (14A, sexual content) Daily 4:20 7:10 10:10

MARCH OF THE PENGUINS (G) Daily 12:00 2:15 4:30 6:40 9:10

SUPERCROSS (PG, coarse language) Daily 1:10

CLAREVIEW

4710-50 Ave 471-7800

THE BROTHERS GRIMM (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 1:10 4:00 7:20 10:05

THE CAVE (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:10

RED EYE (PG, violence, not recommended for young children) Daily 12:40 2:50 5:10 7:35 9:35

THE 40 YEAR-OLD VIRGIN (18A, coarse language, sexual content) Daily 1:30 4:10 7:05 9:45

VALIANT (G) Daily 12:50 2:40 5:00 7:00 8:50

THE SKELETON KEY (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 1:20 3:50 6:30 9:10

FOUR BROTHERS (18A, violence) Daily 1:40 4:20 7:50 10:10

DEUCE BIGALOW: EUROPEAN GIGOLO (14A, sexual content, coarse language, crude content) Daily 1:00 3:05 5:05 7:30

SUPERCROSS (PG, coarse language) Daily 9:30

THE DUKES OF HAZZARD (PG, coarse language) Daily 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY (PG) Daily 12:45

WEDDING CRASHERS (14A, sexual content) Daily 2:00 4:35 7:10 9:55

GALAXY CINEMAS @ SHERWOOD PARK

2000 Sherwood Park 461-1111

THE BROTHERS GRIMM (14A, frightening scenes) Fri-Sun 1:00 3:50 7:15 10:00 Mon-Thu 3:50 7:15 10:00

THE CAVE (14A, frightening scenes) Fri-Sun 1:20 4:10 7:30 10:10 Mon-Thu 4:10 7:30 10:10

RED EYE (PG, violence, not recommended for young children) Fri-Sun 1:30 4:20 7:40 10:15 Mon-Thu 4:20 7:40 10:15

THE 40 YEAR-OLD VIRGIN (18A, coarse language, sexual content) Fri-Sun 12:40 3:30 6:50 9:40 Mon-Thu 3:30 6:50 9:40

VALIANT (G) Fri-Sun 12:30 2:30 4:30 7:00 9:00 Mon-Thu 4:30 7:00 9:00

THE SKELETON KEY (14A, frightening scenes) Fri-Sun 12:50 3:40 7:20 9:45 Mon-Thu 3:40 7:20 9:45

FOUR BROTHERS (18A, violence) Fri-Sun 1:10 4:00 6:40 9:20 Mon-Thu 4:00 6:40 9:20

THE DUKES OF HAZZARD (PG, coarse language) Fri-Sun 12:10 3:10 6:45 9:30 Mon-Thu 3:10 6:45 9:30

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY (PG) Fri-Sun 12:20 3:20 6:30 Mon-Thu 3:20 6:30

WEDDING CRASHERS (14A, sexual content) Fri-Sun 12:00 3:00 7:10 9:50 Mon-Thu 3:00 7:10 9:50

SUPERCROSS (PG, coarse language) Daily 9:10

GARNEAU

10100-101 Ave 461-1111

ME AND YOU AND EVERYONE WE KNOW (18A, sexual content) Fri-Tue 7:00 9:00 Sat-Sun 2:00

THE CONSTANT GARDENER (14A, coarse language, mature theme) Wed-Thu 7:00 9:30 Sat-Sun Mon 2:00

Gateway 8

10100-101 Ave 461-1111

VALIANT (G) 12:40 2:35 4:30 7:00 9:15

UNDISCOVERED (PG) 1:00 3:30 7:10 9:40

HUSTLE AND FLOW (18A, coarse language) 1:30 4:15 7:00 9:45

WAR OF THE WORLDS (14A, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children) 1:20 4:05 7:15 9:45

MUST LOVE DOGS (PG, not recommended for children) 12:50 3:15 6:50 9:25

FANTASTIC FOUR (PG, not suitable for young children) 1:15 3:45 7:20

STEALTH (14A) 9:50

THE ISLAND (14A) 1:10 3:50 6:40 9:35

BAD NEWS BEARS (14A) Fri-Sat Mon-Tue Wed-Thu 1:05 4:00 6:30 Sun 1:05 6:30

GRANDIN THEATRE

Grandin Mall, Sir Winston Churchill Ave, St. Albert 458-0922

THE BROTHERS GRIMM (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 1:10 3:30 5:40 7:40 10:00

VALIANT (G) Sat-Sun 11:30 Daily 1:35 3:35 5:20 7:00

WEDDING CRASHERS (14A, sexual content) Daily 9:00

THE SKELETON KEY (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 3:25 5:30 7:40 9:45

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY (PG) Daily 12:55

RED EYE (PG, violence, not recommended for young children) Sat-Sun 11:15 Daily 1:25 3:20 5:15 7:20 9:20

THE 40 YEAR-OLD VIRGIN (18A, coarse language, sexual content) Daily 2:45 5:00 7:25 9:45

LEBOC CINEMAS

4702-50 St. Lebo 496-2729

FOUR BROTHERS (18A, violence) Daily 1:00 3:25 5:50 8:15

THE 40 YEAR OLD VIRGIN (18A, coarse language, sexual content) Daily 1:05 3:35 6:55 9:30

THE DUKES OF HAZZARD (PG, coarse language) Daily 3:30 9:30

THE BROTHERS GRIMM (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 1:00 3:30 7:05 9:30

BAD NEWS BEARS (14A) Daily 1:10 7:00

NEW WEST MALL 8

10100-101 Ave 461-1111

HERBIE: FULLY LOADED (G) Fri-Sun 2:10 4:50 7:10 9:45 Mon-Thu 4:50 7:10 9:45

MADAGASCAR (G) Fri-Sun 2:00 4:10 6:50 9:10 Mon-Thu 4:10 6:50 9:10

THE LONGEST YARD (14A, coarse language) Fri-Sun 1:50 4:20 7:00 9:30 Mon-Thu 4:20 7:00 9:30

CRASH (14A, FREQUENT coarse language, mature themes) Fri-Sun 2:20 4:40 7:30 9:50 Mon-Thu 4:40 7:30 9:50

THE SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS (PG) Fri-Sun 1:40 4:30 7:20 9:40 Mon-Thu 4:30 7:20 9:40

CINDERELLA MAN (PG, coarse language) Fri-Sun 2:30 6:30 9:25 Mon-Thu 6:30 9:25

SAHARA (PG, violence) Fri-Sun 1:20 4:00 6:40 9:20 Mon-Thu 4:00 6:40 9:20

MONSTER-IN-LAW (PG, coarse language, not recommended for children) Fri-Sun 1:30 3:50 6:45 9:00 Mon-Thu 3:50 6:45 9:00

NORTH EDMONTON CINEMAS

10100-101 Ave 461-1111

THE CONSTANT GARDENER (14A, coarse language, mature theme) Wed-Thu 12:55 3:55 6:50 9:50

THE BROTHERS GRIMM (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:05

UNDISCOVERED (PG) Daily 2:10 4:45 7:00 9:20

THE CAVE (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 12:40 3:00 5:20 8:00 10:20

RED EYE (PG, violence, not recommended for young children) Daily 1:15 3:20 5:30 7:45 10:00

THE 40 YEAR-OLD VIRGIN (18A, coarse language, sexual content) Daily 1:40 4:40 7:40 10:30

VALIANT (G) Daily 1:00 2:50 4:50 7:10 9:10

WAR OF THE WORLDS (14A, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children) Daily 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 9:45

THE SKELETON KEY (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 1:20 4:00 7:20 9:55

SUPERCROSS (PG, coarse language) Fri-Tue 9:00

FOUR BROTHERS (18A, violence) Daily 1:50 5:10 7:50 10:15

BROKEN FLOWERS (14A) Daily 9:45

DEUCE BIGALOW: EUROPEAN GIGOLO (14A, sexual content, coarse language, crude content) Fri-Tue 2:00 4:20 6:50

THE DUKES OF HAZZARD (PG, coarse language) Daily 1:10 3:50 7:05 9:40

MUST LOVE DOGS (PG, not recommended for young children) Daily 9:30

SKY HIGH (G) Daily 12:30 2:40 5:00 7:25

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY (PG) Daily 12:50 3:40 6:45

WEDDING CRASHERS (14A, sexual content) Daily 1:30 4:10 7:30 10:10

PRINCESS

10100-101 Ave 461-1111

THE WILD PARROTS OF TELEGRAPH HILL (G) Fri-Tue 9:15 Sat-Thu 7:15 Sat-Sun 1:00

MAD HOT BALLROOM (G) Sat-Sun 3:15

LADIES IN LAVENDER (PG) Sat-Sun 3:00

MYSTERIOUS SKIN (R, sexual violence, disturbing content) Daily 7:00 9:00 Sat-Sun 1:15

ME AND YOU AND EVERYONE WE KNOW (18A, sexual content) Wed-Thu 9:15

SILVERCITY WEST EDMONTON MALL

WEM, 8882-170 St. 444-2400

THE BROTHERS GRIMM (14A, frightening scenes) 12:30 1:00 3:30 4:00 7:00 7:30 10:10 10:30 Fri-Sat 1:00 3:30 7:00 10:10

THE CAVE (14A, frightening scenes) 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:20

THE 40 YEAR OLD VIRGIN (18A, coarse language, sexual content) 1:15 4:10 7:15 10:10

RED EYE (PG, violence, not recommended for young children) 1:40 4:05 7:25 9:45

BATMAN BEGINS (PG, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children) 1:40 4:10 7:10 10:10

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY (PG) 12:40 6:55

FOUR BROTHERS (18A, violence) 12:55 3:35 6:55 9:35

THE SKELETON KEY (14A, frightening scenes) 12:35 3:55 7:40 10:25

VALIANT (G) 12:00 2:15 4:25 7:10 9:20

WEDDING CRASHERS (14A, sexual content) 12:15 4:20 7:20 10:15

THE DUKES OF HAZZARD (PG, coarse language) 12:25 3:35 6:45 9:40

DEUCE BIGALOW: EUROPEAN GIGOLO (14A, sexual content, substance abuse) Fri-Sat 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00 Tue-Thu 1:30 4:15 7:35 10:05 Wed 1:30 4:15 10:05

FANTASTIC FOUR (PG, not suitable for young children) 9:35

SKY HIGH (G) 12:15 3:50 7:05

SOUTH EDMONTON COMMON

10100-101 Ave 461-1111

THE BROTHERS GRIMM (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 12:15 1:45 3:15 4:45 6:45 7:45 9:45 11:15

THE CAVE (14A, frightening scenes) THX Daily 12:15 2:45 5:10 7:30 9:50

SUPERCROSS (PG, coarse language) Fri-Tue 1:00

RED EYE (PG, violence, not recommended for young children) THX Daily 12:50 3:20 5:45 8:00 10:40

THE 40 YEAR-OLD VIRGIN (18A, coarse language, sexual content) THX Daily 1:40 4:30 7:20 10:15

THE ARTIST (14A, coarse language, language may offend) Daily 1:20 3:45 7:00 9:15

SHIRLEY BASSETT: EPISODE IN REVENGE OF THE BIRTH (PG, not recommended for young children) Daily 1:50 5:15 8:30

THE SKELETON KEY (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 12:40 3:10 5:40 8:10 10:30

DEUCE BIGALOW: EUROPEAN GIGOLO (14A, sexual content, coarse language, crude content) Fri-Sat 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00 Tue-Thu 1:30 4:15 7:35 10:05 Wed 1:30 4:15 10:05

FOUR BROTHERS (18A, violence) Daily 1:40 4:20 7:00 9:40

BROKEN FLOWERS (14A) Fri-Tue 3:40 6:40 9:10

THE DUKES OF HAZZARD (PG, coarse language) Daily 12:30 3:00 5:30 7:50 10:10

SKY HIGH (G) Daily 12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:20

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY (PG) Daily 1:30 4:15 6:45

WEDDING CRASHERS (14A, sexual content) Daily 1:10 4:10 7:15 10:00

BATMAN BEGINS (PG, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children) Fri-Tue 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00 Wed 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

THE 40 YEAR-OLD VIRGIN (18A, coarse language, sexual content) Daily 1:40 4:40 7:40 10:30

VALIANT (G) Daily 1:00 2:50 4:50 7:10 9:10

WAR OF THE WORLDS (14A, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children) Daily 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 9:45

THE SKELETON KEY (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 1:20 4:00 7:20 9:55

SUPERCROSS (PG, coarse language) Fri-Tue 9:00

FOUR BROTHERS (18A, violence) Daily 1:50 5:10 7:50 10:15

BROKEN FLOWERS (14A



Get to know your rabbit

Much-maligned *The Brown Bunny* deserves the praise that *Broken Flowers* got instead

By PAUL MATWYCHUK

In 2003, Vincent Gallo's *The Brown Bunny*—the story of a lonely man traveling across the country and having brief, poetic

liaisons with a series of lonely women—had its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival and was greeted with unprecedented scorn from the international critical community. (Roger Ebert called it the worst film in the history of Cannes.) Two years later, Jim Jarmusch's *Broken Flowers*—the story of a lonely man traveling across the country and having brief, poetic liaisons with a series of lonely women—had its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival, where it won the Grand Prix. Buoyed by enthusiastic

reviews and the deadpan appeal of Bill Murray, *Broken Flowers* is shaping up to be one of the summer's biggest arthouse hits. *The Brown Bunny*, meanwhile, never recovered from its



disastrous reception at Cannes; without a proper North American distribution deal, Gallo was reduced to booking the theatres all by himself, and the film was unavailable even on DVD until just last week.

The Brown Bunny, despite its horrible reputation, is actually a much more interesting, challenging and hypnotic film than the wildly overpraised *Broken Flowers*. Vincent Gallo, who wrote, directed, produced, edited and photographed the film and stars in it as lovesick motorcycle racer Bud Clay, may be a supreme narcissist, but why is the passive sad sack Bill Murray plays in *Broken Flowers* supposed to be any more appealing? (Murray's joyless, self-pitying attitude is so at odds with his character's reputation as a legendary ladies' man that it almost seems like Jarmusch's idea of a joke.) *The Brown Bunny* even has better driving music—instead of the self-consciously hip Ethiopian jazz Jarmusch has Murray listen to, Bud Clay's long drives down the highway are set to unexpectedly haunting tracks by '70s troubadours like Gordon Lightfoot.

GALLO IS IN LOVE with extended shots in which his camera stares through the fly-specked windshield of his character's van at the road ahead, and equally long, unbroken shots of his hawklike profile as he silently mans the steering wheel, occasionally wiping a tear from his eye whenever the memories of his old girlfriend Daisy (Chloë Sevigny) become too painful to bear. And Bud has plenty of time for reflection: he's driving all the way from New Hampshire to California in hopes that he can achieve closure on his relationship with Daisy once he arrives. His only distractions are a series of hesitant encounters with tellingly named women: a teenaged cashier named Violet, a prostitute named Rose, an aging beauty named Lilly (played by onetime supermodel

Cheryl Tiegs, now 56, whose nearly wordless performance is superior to that of any of the actresses in *Broken Flowers*). It all culminates in the film's most notorious and startling moment: a graphic, unsimulated sex scene between Gallo and Sevigny set in a blindingly white hotel room.

The prurient appeal of this sequence could be the reason my local video outlet decided to stock more than a dozen copies of *The Brown Bunny* on their shelves—a huge number for a movie as slow, arty, and obscure as this one. But this scene has more going for it than mere shock value. Granted, the idea of someone climaxing his own film by showing himself getting a blowjob from an Oscar-nominated actress sounds fairly sleazy, but the scene doesn't feel exploitative. It's creepy and uncomfortable, sure, but appropriately so, and it gives you the key to understanding everything you've seen Bud do in the rest of the movie. Suddenly, the film doesn't seem aimless or self-indulgent at all; instead, it reveals itself as a quietly powerful portrait of a flawed, immature man trying to come to grips with his guilty conscience.

As an actor, Gallo emanates a creepy, greasy, hitchhiker-with-a-machete-hidden-in-his-backpack vibe that makes most people's skin crawl—mine included. If I had to take a cross-country car trip in real life, I'd much rather go with Bill Murray. But if the trip only exists in the movies, well, I'd happily hop back into the van with Gallo. ☺

THE BROWN BUNNY

Written and directed by Vincent Gallo • Starring Vincent Gallo and Chloë Sevigny • Now on DVD

Virgin hairy

Steve Carell's chest-waxing scene hardly seems worth the effort in limp *40-Year-Old Virgin*

By EDEN MUNRO

I was sitting around the other night with nothing left to give to the world—not even enough energy to change the channel when the Luke Wilson/Will Ferrell/Vince Vaughn comedy *Old School* came on. And so I sat through the whole film, chuckling occasionally, and even laughing out loud a few times. During the commercial breaks, I repeatedly saw clips for *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, a film that is apparently being marketed to the same viewers as *Old School*. Well, I sure am delighted that I managed to get in to see this one, because I learned a whole lot of important things from it.

Andy Stitzer (*The Daily Show*'s Steve Carell) is the movie's title character, a geeky toy collector and videogame enthusiast who rides a bike and wears very uncool clothes. He's a lot like Pee Wee Herman, actu-

ally, except Pee Wee had a better movie once upon a time. Anyway, once the little secret of his virginity gets out amongst his electronics superstore co-workers, his new buddies take him under their wings in a concentrated effort to get Andy away from his reclusivity and onto the proper path in life—you know, the one fueled by sex and alcohol. There are plenty of wacky high jinks along the way, as each of the guys



has to deal with their own issues regarding the fairer sex, and then it all gets even more complicated when Andy meets and falls in love with Trish (Catherine Keener). I could go on, but I'm sure that you already know the rest, this being one of those films that follows a painfully predictable line of development.

I CAN SAY THAT the chemistry between the actors was impressive at times. The guys playing Andy's buddies (Paul Rudd, Romany Malco, and Seth Rogen) click with Carell, managing to come across as sincere in their efforts to help him, even when their characters are written as an

unlikable bunch of jerks. Carell and Keener are even better; it's nice to see that the 40-year-old virgin is actually attracted to a woman his own age instead of the latest model/actress/whatever that Hollywood is trying to foist upon us. To tell you the truth, there was a glimmer of life in the movie when it became about Andy and Trish's budding relationship. But then that moment passed.

You must surely be asking yourself just what sort of valuable information could be gleaned from a film of this ilk. Why, the rules of comedy, of course. First of all, drunk driving is funny, especially when there are absolutely no consequences for said actions. Second, gay jokes are hilarious. Even better if you can work in something about a transvestite prostitute. The next one is obvious: bodily fluids are pee-your-pants funny, especially when that happens on-screen. Anger against women? Oh, yeah, they've got it. Racial stereotyping? Check. Be sure not to make fun of the stereotypes, either—if you want laughs, you have to play into them in a big-ass way. And, one of the most important lessons: anytime you can make the supporting cast think that the main character is a



serial killer, go for it. Yup, those are the makings of *real* comedy.

An utterly out-of-place reenactment of the "Age of Aquarius" sequence from *Hair* proved to be the highlight of the film, but only because it grabs you by the shirt and drags you right out of the world of *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*. The sequence also serves as a reminder that there are films out there that, while not exactly being brilliant as art, at least make an effort at tackling a subject

without resorting to utter stupidity and offensiveness. I actually feel a little bit dumber after sitting through *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*—and that's coming from someone who made it through *Old School* relatively unscathed. ☺

THE 40-YEAR-OLD VIRGIN

Directed by Judd Apatow • Written by Judd Apatow and Steve Carell • Starring Steve Carell, Catherine Keener, Paul Rudd • Now playing

Reviews A*G*G

****—**Blacklisted (7)**—This is a high-energy show of sketch comedy created by some of Edmonton's finest improvisers. While there is no strong unifying theme between the skits, inspiration is often taken from commercials and popular culture, as the troupe take aim at Schwarzenegger and Starbucks with both sly and overt wit. There's a great bit between Subway-slimmed Jared and Ronald McDonald, as well as plenty of potty humour. ★★★★★ (CN)

2 Million Years of Technology (10)—Like most university professors, it's clear that John Sobol is passionate and knowledgeable about his subject matter. Half poet and half educator, Sobol gestures emphatically while discussing the evolution of communication and origins of the universe. Disseminating his thoughts with a spirited poetic flow and the occasional sax solo, Sobol's musings are both entertaining and provoking. But unless you have a PhD in evolutionary philosophy, you'll probably sit through the performance, nodding your head along with the rest of the audience pretending to know what he's talking about. ★★ (TK)

A Brief History of Warfare (7)—Paul Buckley as Ivan Penaluna, war aficionado, started out with exceptionally strong material as he began his mock-lecture on war, eliciting much laughter. Complete with dancing girls and slides, his show offered a wacky take on war, and how to make it sexier for the public. It could have been the late-night audience, but the show petered out quickly and considerably. Although he had some great material—even some letters he exchanged with the British Ministry of Defence—the show itself wasn't all that it could have been. ★★ (CN)

A Day For Surprises/ The Love Course (4)—The cast's expert comic timing, especially Matthew Kloster's and Andrea Ritter's, make this a hilarious double-bill about bookish people and literary worlds. Romantic abstractions meet messy reality, and relationships roller-coast from the manic-obsessive to the melancholy-tragic. One piece, where the audience sits in on a class taught by an earnest romantic professor and her married, doggedly pragmatic colleague, is a madcap comedy of manners. The other is a surreal, touching look at a fusty librarian's lovesickness. This is a thoughtful comedy that will have you reading between the lines and rolling in the aisles. ★★★★★ (BG)

A Twist of Murder (7)—Beginning with a pair in an affair, and the pair conspiring to murder the unwanted wife, this play certainly doesn't end up where you think it might. On the whole, the play showed much promise, especially with Tangle Caron in the role of the woman scorned—she had it nailed. However, the play suffered a tad,

from poor blocking (causing some of the audience to miss some of the action), and moments of shallowness in the other two characters. ★★★ (CN)

Adieu, Friedrich Lips (9)—University is basically a series of bizarre lectures delivered by self-indulgent borderline psychotics in tweed, but few real-life academics reach the heights of absurdity of *Adieu, Friedrich Lips*'s Dr. Cyril Chichester Sinclair. Presented as a musicology lecture, *Adieu, Friedrich Lips*

his Oprah impression. ★★★ (TK)

Afterplay (13)—Two characters from Chekhov's plays *Uncle Vanya* and *Three Sisters* meet in a café in Moscow. What follows is a series of contrived discussions and monologues about what happened to the characters after the original plays. Although Liana Shannon and John Sproule pull off excellent performances, the script comes off as an academic exercise. If you don't know the original plays, you won't get the jokes or

the obvious. Trying to find his place in life, he finally stumbles upon mysterious master detective Antoine Feval, who takes him under his wing. A killer one-hander pulled off perfectly by British born actor Chris Gibbs, this play is non-stop silly fun. Gibbs has a written a witty script but he can't seem to keep himself from ad libbing for some added laughs. He has a great time poking fun at himself, the Winnipeg Fringe crowd and the audience. ★★★★★ (PD)

particularly Cody Porter as a pent-up romantic and Tasha Weenk as a single mother who exudes a wounded girlishness—draw as much strange beauty as they can out of Labute's haltingly repressed, tense sexual landscape. ★★★ (BG)

The Beloved Dearly (12)—Ernie discovers that he can earn money by hosting funerals for his friends' pets, but only with the help of the talents of coffin designer extraordinaire Dusty and the weep-on-command ability of Swimming Pool. Graeme Haugen executed his role in multi-dimension, while Harlan Bertolin as Dusty and Becky Phillips as Swimming Pool were also in command of their roles. It is reminiscent of a backyard play with a sheet on a clothesline as a curtain in its beautifully naive delivery: wonderful, but ultimately just for the kids and their parents. ★★ (CN)

Beneath Solid Ground (1)—Trying to find a better way to wile away the time than playing crib and drinking, a young group of friends decide to explore their inner selves by digging a hole. Along the way they discover a lot about life and themselves and entertain the audience to boot. This well-written and well-executed play tries to hide a host of serious life questions behind a wall of drunken tomfoolery, but in-between the shits and giggles, there's something to be learned here. So grab a shovel and take the plunge, you won't be disappointed. ★★★★★ (PD)

The Big Funk (9)—Written by *Moonstruck* author John Patrick Stanley, *The Big Funk* tells the story of four characters facing various existential crises while competing to be the ultimate hero of the play. Stanley's script is brought to life by an impressive ensemble cast, especially Jessica Leroux, who has an engaging, Kirsten Dunst quality about her, even when she finds herself lying naked in a bathtub while being washed by the charmingly awkward Austin, who ultimately becomes the play's hero by disrobing during a tense dinner party. Expertly acted and perfectly staged, this is a standout of this year's festival. ★★★★★ (RM)

BitchSlap! (C)—Darrin Hagen has written an uproariously funny satire in which grown men dress up like women and act bitchy. This isn't much of a revelation, considering Hagen's track record at the Fringe, but what is surprising is the inspired casting of Trevor Schmidt as fading diva Bette Davis. Schmidt steals the show, delivering every line with a twisted smirk and maniacally arched eyebrow. Davina Stewart also nails her role as gossip columnist Hedda Hooper, and watching these three, ahem, women try to out bitch each other makes for an enjoyable evening of theatre. ★★★★★ (RM)

Well, after a long, '60s-themed weekend of hangin' in the sun in Ol' Strathcona at Fringe A-Go-Go, the reviews, along with the tales from the beer tents, are in. As always, we found some shows were groovy, some were merely trippy, while others were really square, and since we're all in this together, we've compiled a handy listing of this year's 137 plays (apologies in advance to Beautifuller, whose show we missed and therefore do not get a review), as well as a handy little star rating system to let you know just how—if we may drag this intro's half-hearted '60s tone out just a little longer—"groovy" we found them.

Bear in mind, however, that everybody's parachute is a different colour, so we want you to think of these writeups not as definitive judgements, but rather as one more entry into the dialogue to consider as you negotiate your way through the final weekend of North America's largest theatre festival. Uh... man.

—CAROLYN NIKODYM

Our reviewers: Colleen Addison (CA), Chris Boutet (CB), Leah Collins (LC), Phil Dupperon (PD), Brian Gibson (BG), Tyson Kaban (TK), Elizabeth Ludwig (EL), Agnieszka Matejko (AM), Ross Moroz (RM), Eden Munro (EM), Carolyn Nikodym (CN), Jasmine Politeski (JP), Steve Sandor (SSa), Sonya Solo (SSo)

is an insightful satire of pretentious academia, complete with disjointed notes and ridiculous overhead projections. The jokes are a tad esoteric (a passing knowledge of classical music is recommended) and the script could be trimmed considerably, but the talent and enthusiasm of the performers more than make up for these minor deficiencies. ★★★ (RM)

Adventures of a Substitute Teacher (10)—In this appealing yet sappy play, Steven Karwoski, dressed in a short-sleeved button-up shirt and even shorter clip-on tie, tells the tale of a substitute teacher who will never be able to take the place of the person who came before him. It's comical when he imitates the diabolical vice-principal who patrols the schoolyard in a motorized wheelchair. He's a funny guy and expresses some solid insight into the life of someone who's completely replaceable. But if he wants this to be a permanent gig, he needs to work on

have any kind of investment in the story; if you do, you'll probably be left wondering what the point is of putting these two characters together in the first place. ★★ (EL)

American Cake (3)—Chicago-based comedian John Pereira's routine, told while he greedily wolfs down an angel-food cake, needs a lot more polish. He fires too many blanks that grind his show's momentum to a halt, but Pereira's worst crime is the assumption that the average Canadian audience knows just about as much about America as Americans do. When he steps behind a pulpit and runs through a list skewering each of the American presidents, the routine goes totally off the rails as the audience, for the most part, doesn't have the historical context to get the jokes. ★★ (SSa)

Antoine Feval (1)—Meet Barnaby Gibbs, a loser with ample limitations, a taste for Sherlock Holmes and absolutely no grasp of

An Unfortunate Woman (5)—On a blank stage, adorned with only a single chair, Nicola Gunn manages to portray a long list of characters, including a dog, so well, you'd swear the set was full. This is the story of Stanley Trundle, a lowly registry clerk whose suicide makes up the first scene of the play. In other words, this is not a cheery piece, and the play also starts off a bit slowly. Gunn is worth the effort, though; after a while, it's hard to take your eyes off the stage. ★★★★★ (CA)

Bash: Latterday Plays (4)—This trilogy of Mamet-lite monologues—by a brittle businessman, a confident couple, and a jailed woman—gets better with each installment. As frail, trapped souls reflect on their lives, darkened by murderous self-preservation and festering bigotry, Mormon conservatism meets Greek tragedy. It's impossible to completely evoke the pain of a character with just half-an-hour each, but the performers—

SEE NEXT PAGE

Bonhoeffer (3)—South African writer and actor Peter Krummeck has sure taken on a big task, condensing the tumultuous life of German theologian and revolutionary Dietrich Bonhoeffer. A Lutheran minister and teacher who eventually joined the German resistance movement, Bonhoeffer put his Christian principles to the test when he participated in a plot to kill Hitler. Krummeck does an excellent job showing Bonhoeffer's internal moral battle, but he glosses over the actual assassination attempt, and that can leave the layperson a little lost. But it is a small matter. ★★★★★ (SSA)

Boy Groove (J)—Chris Craddock's spoof of the boy band phenomenon returns to the Edmonton Fringe after wowing audiences across the continent. The performances are still brilliant, and the production is tight as a drum, but this edition of *Boy Groove* does suffer a bit from a pretty obvious deficiency: it's 2005. Boy bands haven't been popular in years. The jokes are still funny, sure (everybody still remembers the mid-'90s), but many of the references feel a bit dated. Still, an incredibly enjoyable ninety minutes of theatre, and the venue only adds to the atmosphere. ★★★★★ (RM)

The Breast Show (A)—Bridget Ryan and Shannon Tyler are energetic, funny, and talented women with a flair for belting out songs. As the title suggests, this show is a series of cabaret songs focused on women and their jugs, melons, bug bites, boobs and, my favorite, gazongas, from little girl joy to the trials of breast cancer. It's a laughable yet sincere look at women, their men and the bumpy roads in between. With a portion of the proceeds going to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, it's easy to look past the monotony of the show and just think about boobies. ★★ (JP)

Breathe (2)—Breathing. Something we take for granted until we lose the ability to do it on our own. In *Breathe*, Dot Reiley gasps for breath in an iron lung, looking back upon the defining moments of her life. Rebecca Starr infuses the character with a fighting spirit as Dot comes up against the cruelties of life. Far from maudlin in its approach, however, *Breathe* uses humor to emphasize the impact of the heavier moments. The play taps into myriad emotions surrounding death and loss, drawing you in and making you explicitly aware of your own breath. ★★★★★ (EM)

Broadway Bables (5)—Nice choreography and a sense of fun make *Broadway Bables* a solid offering. This isn't a play, but rather a revue of Broadway musical numbers accompanied by an amusing Randy Mueller on piano. Highlights include a funny "It Takes Two" from *Hairspray* and a good "I'm a Woman" (sung by the female and male members of the cast) from *The Challenge*. At 90 minutes, the show is a bit long, and the choice of songs seems a tad disorganized, but overall, it's not a bad pick for an afternoon's entertainment. ★★★ (CA)

Brothers of the Brush (11)—Set in the recession-stricken Dublin of 1991, this startlingly realistic play covers two days in the lives of three house painters and their greedy boss. The plot lumbers along at a fairly slow pace, but after a while you begin to see the bitter irony of the title, as the rebellious Heno and the pacifist Lar begin to forsake their friendship in a fight for a promotion. Complete with a pitiful-old-man-taking-his-last-shot-at-becoming-a-somebody character, this is like *Death of a Salesman* or *Glengarry Glenn Ross*, Dublin-style. ★★★ (SSo)

The Burning Bush! (10)—With its suggestive title, it's not a surprise that this show begins with a stripper named Christi teaching the audience how to erotic dance. After the brief tutorial, ditsy Christi introduces Barbara Bombawitz, a failed rabbi who changed her life through Kabbalah. Plenty of Madonna and public hair jokes are scattered through Barbara's endearing tale of spiritual discovery, but it's Tracey Erin Smith's lean script and flawless portrayal of a conflicted

spiritual leader/amateur stripper that will leave you emotionally naked, pensive and a little turned on. Who knew a rabbi could be so dirty? ★★★★★ (TK)

Candy from a Baby (7)—Warren, a newly freed ex-con, ropes a couple of kids into a dangerous scheme that is meant to pave the road to a peaceful life. Kids can be cute on stage and elicit laughs by doing just that, but when the story is about an ex-con doing One Last Job, the kids aren't necessarily meant to be all that cute. Overall, their roles are handled well, playing to their strengths and minimizing inherent weaknesses. And the role of Warren is played exceptionally well, creating a believable, and even likeable, character. ★★ (CN)

Charred Footprints (8)—Based on the true story of the playwrights' great-great-aunt and -uncle who move to Alberta from South Dakota at the turn of the century looking for a better life, this simple but fascinating tale of desperation, betrayal and attempted murder gets a solid stage treatment from Jasslyn Miller and Matthew Taylor, whose genuine and likeable performances are the highlight of a play that



doesn't overreach or devolve into frivolity. ★★★★★ (CB)

The Chronologues (1)—It's the future meeting the past, complete with fart jokes. This hilarious string of sketches and multimedia gags doesn't let the facts get in the way of a good story. There is some sort of silly plot about time travel tying it all together, but that doesn't really matter. What matters is the ruthless parody of pop culture in all its glory—everything from infomercials to modern day morality gets a comedic kick in the wazoo from these guys (and gal). Nothing highbrow here, just a lot of guilty pleasures and a lot of laughs. ★★★★★ (PD)

The Cloister (7)—The story of 12th century nun Hildegard von Bingen has enchanted and mystified people of all types and all religions. Written and acted by Twilla MacLeod, this show deals with some difficult subject matter; while it's exceptionally acted, it's not easy to identify with the nun herself. Although MacLeod offers some background knowledge of von Bingen's outstanding accomplishments in the program, these facts become a bit lost in the actual play. The best parts come from MacLeod's singing voice and the way she nails the nun as a precocious girl. ★★★ (CN)

The Cocanuts (5)—The Cocanuts was a Broadway hit long before it brought the Marx brothers to fame and fortune on the silver screen. Now these Grant MacEwan grads perform the musical in all its Broadway glory, complete with splashy set-pieces and singing bellhops. The plot is nicely wacky, just what you'd expect from a comedy starring the Marxes. Stephan Rumak is great, if scene stealing, as a wisecracking Grouchoized version of Mr. Schlemmel, while Kendra Connor sings prettily in the ingénue role.

But at nearly two hours, the jokes wear a tad thin. ★★★★★ (CA)

The Compleat Wrks of Wilm Shkspr (Abridged) (6)—Dink jokes, vomit, cross-dressing fellas, at least three knees to the groin and an obligatory tit-grab: oh yeah, and there was something about Shakespeare, too. Don't expect Stratford, this is a slapstick once-over of the bard's canon—especially the two plays everyone's guaranteed to have read in high school, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*. By the half-way mark, you'll have likely had it with the that-guy's-totally-wearing-a-dress gags, but stick out the cornballery for silly gems like a five-second *Hamlet* by this cast with a knack for over-the-top jokes. ★★ (LC)

Confessions of a Class Clown (11)—Starling as himself, Ryan Gladstone relates the rise and fall, and rebirth of his hero-clown persona "Buddy Justice." Ever since grade four, Buddy Justice has been fighting the education system, striving to bring a touch of laughter and humanity to a regime of unyielding monotony. Gladstone maintains a great connection with the audience as he relates such tales as streaking at the student



council elections, or operates the amazing Fart Machine. Gladstone's charming performance and the vividness with which he brings all the characters to life make for a highly entertaining show. ★★★★★ (SSo)

Crosseyed Rascals and The Psychedelic Fridge (11)—You can literally sense the good vibrations coming from these five Winnipeg improv artists as they come on stage, ready to turn any idea thrown out at them into a hilarious sketch. But soon you discover that their dialogue lags a little behind their enthusiasm. There are a few suspenseful moments where you can almost hear the gears turning in one of the Rascals' brains. And there is something compelling about the sweetness and innocence of their playful brand of comedy. ★★ (SSo)

Dance With Me (7)—We have Grace, in an affair with Ray, who gets an invitation to tea with Ruth, Ray's wife. Will she tell? That's the burning question, but then there's a twist, not only in the fireworks you think should happen, but also in the cliché male fantasy. The script itself is poetic, playing with words and phrases, but the problem lies in the delivery. There are moments, but the obvious chemistry that needs to be there gets lost in flat acting, making it seem too long a wait for the punch line. ★★ (CN)

Designed Specifically For a Woman Like You (6)—See this play and you're not likely to forget the title. For 75 per cent of the cast, three women in matching white dresses and mannequin smiles (Donna Sellinger, Ioan Kubicek and Madeline Fitch), it's the only line they've got—and it's frequently juxtaposed to a meandering stream-of-consciousness story coming from Kate DeRosa as a lady-shopper. The effect is something abstractly and quietly amusing. But the

semantic exercising at work here likely isn't tailor-made for most audiences, who will be thankful things wrap up in a little over half an hour. ★★ (LC)

Die-Nasty: The Legendary Live Improvised Soap Opera (8) If you're even reading this review section, chances are you've been to, or at least heard of, *Die-Nasty* by now. And seeing as it's in its 15th season, you could probably assume it's good. Well, you're right. It's awesome. But you didn't need me to tell you that. Just go line up early and get ready to watch Edmonton's acting elite put on what is consistently one of the best shows at the Fringe. ★★★★★ (CB)

The Dixieland Murders (11)—This is a play about a woman who is abused by her boorish husband—who is then poisoned and shot by his wife and her lesbian lover. Based on the Dixie Chicks' "Goodbye Earl" and various other songs, this story is rather excessive in its heart-wrenching sentimentality. Really, some of these plays should come with a "Sentimental Content" warning. Nevertheless, the two leading ladies are fabulous singers. So if you happen to be a fan of the Dixie Chicks who enjoys tearjerking melodrama, feel free



to knock yourself out! ★★★ (SSo)

Dominance & Submission (5)—It's not what you think. There are no whips and chains, not onstage at least. Instead, this is a portrayal of a marriage, between the famed masochist Leopold Sacher-Masoch and his wife Wanda. Unfortunately, the actors hardly move and rarely interact, making them seem less like a pair and more like strangers, talking to the air. For a two-person show, too, the performance lacks balance, with the focus on Wanda. Her every motivation is explained—in contrast to her husband, who remains, well, weird. ★ (CA)

Doppelganger (6)—There's no shortage of material discussing the war in the Middle East, but don't dismiss *Doppelganger* as one of the pack. Aptly named Calgary businessman Adam Smith (Nicholas Cole) finds himself prisoner of what he assumes to be an Islamic terrorist camp. Awaiting execution, Smith begins a surreal reflection, questioning the meaning of freedom, good and evil and how his own choices contributed to his fate. The script and acting are thoughtful—woven together with striking multimedia images and occasional ironic song and dance—leaving the audience mulling Smith's ideas and questions long after the third bag of mini-donuts. ★★★★★ (LC)

Doug and Al in Life Is but a Dream (11)—A certain amount of fun can be derived from watching two clowns who are afraid of being in a show discussing ways of dealing with this situation. But after a while, it becomes tiresome and even disturbing. There are some hilarious moments, such as when they confess to each other that they have never "done it." However, if you really must see a 40-year-old virgin this summer, going to the movies is probably your safest bet. ★★ (SSo)

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (2)—The famous source material may have played a part in the opening day sell-out of this Iain MacFarlane play, but it was the performance by Jom-Bjom Fuller-Gee that held the audience rapt as he took control of the stage with his intense portrayal of the tortured doctor. The tale's gothic horror is broken up with nerve-relaxing humor, but at its heart is a darkness that both terrifies and satisfies, capturing the pain of a man torn apart by good and evil and leaving a chill over the room when it all comes to an end. ★★★★★ (EM)

Driving Back to Vegas in a '64 Skylark The Tribute Show (7)—Using the life and songs of Frank Sinatra, Bremner Duthie offers up a fully-realized one-hander about living life unapologetically and artfully. Not only does Duthie channel ol' Blue Eyes exquisitely and tastefully, he uses the songs of Sinatra, Leonard Cohen, Britney Spears and Nirvana to punctuate his thesis on culture and creativity. A must-see, even if you, like Duthie, thought you didn't like Sinatra. ★★★★★ (CN)

Dying to be Thin (3)—This is not a "play" per se; this is a teary confessional from solo performer Marisa Jordan on the peril of her eating disorder. Basically, we watch a tormented teenager pig out on chocolate, peanut butter, Coke and other sweet treats as she discusses the agony of binge eating and the subsequent vomit sessions. Yes, it's as heavy-handed as those old ABC Afterschool Specials, but her performance did squeeze some tears out of the mothers in the crowd, and Jordan gets props for putting herself on display and being so damn brave. ★★★ (SSA)

Eating Raoul (5)—Set in the '60s, this show never lets you forget it, with its warped sets, leather costumes, and continuous tale of sex-swinging. The cast of *Broadway* does a great job in this singing and dancing tale of a nice couple veering into sado-masochism and murder in order to open their cute little café and get out of L.A. Side characters move the scenery around for set changes during other scenes, which is a bit distracting, but the real misstep is the quick fix ending: funny, but it left me a little stunned. ★★★★★ (CA)

Effable (7)—In this one-person show, Nicole Zylstra delves into growing up in the great suburbs of southern Ontario and her search for belonging and religion. Owning the entire stage, Zylstra captures the nuances of childhood and young womanhood in her beautifully naïve conversations with Jesus and Satan. There is so much poignant truth and humour to her character it would be difficult to feel alone after her performance, and her ability to slip into the various characters quickly, especially Satan, is a joy to watch. ★★★★★ (CN)

Emily Dickinson & I (2)—For much of its ninety minutes, *Emily Dickinson & I* seems to barely exist; in fact, that nonexistence is exactly what it's about on the surface, as Edie Campbell recounts her years-long effort to write a play about Emily Dickinson. At its heart, though, this is a tale about creation, and a challenging one at that. Campbell is passionate about Dickinson's words—both poetry and prose—and she shares this passion with the audience, juxtaposing episodes from her own life with Dickinson's work to create a remarkable piece that delves deeply into its own creation. ★★★★★ (EM)

E Nomini Sancti (8)—Well, it's clear this young group gave it the old high-school try, but there isn't much positive to say about this play about a gut-shot Irish mobster who feels compelled to tell his cliché-ridden life story about underworld ambition while bleeding to death. The majority of plot exposition comes from bleeding guy played by Alexander Forsyth, so you'd think he would have not mumbled constantly in a way that was probably supposed to sound world-weary, but really came out bored. Forsyth has qualities as an actor, but this play just doesn't work. ★ (CB)

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Dear diary, part two

Local actor/playwright shares his Fringe experience

BY TRENT WILKIE

AUGUST 19 FRINGE VIRGINITY AND THE OPENING NIGHT BLUES

You just sit there and wait and the curtain, waiting. We're lucky, people were pouring in at such a weird time of the day. You sit there and wait as the hours turn into minutes turn into seconds turn into nothing. Then light, a brilliant light, and you walk around like a drunken bird reciting everything that you have drilled into the pores of your brain that remembers things and you react with instinct. Everyone is watching you and you don't stand where you should be and the sound cue is off and your ass is so fat! You hit puberty on a stage in front of people that have no money to see you but... this is not the first time, and you think that you add and you subtract and you are rad—you have always been rad. And then it is over; the applause dies and the lights go down and you return the set to its

orbital position and you wait until you can do it all over again.

Then you ask yourself the question, "What the fuck just happened?"

AUGUST 20 BODILY SET FUNCTIONS

The set of a play is like the clothes a person wears: It's not exactly who they are, but gives you a pretty good impression of what they want you to think. In order for the set to draw the audience in, it has to contain certain aspects of theatrical relevance to the character

FRINGE DIARY

of the play. Nobody would enjoy a play about blind sisters growing up together if it were set in the stomach of a unicorn. Actually, no, I take that back.

Secondly, it has to be mobile, as you've got half an hour to set up and half to take down and if you aren't done in that time there is going to be some pissed-off techie drawing pictures of you with knives in your eyes, and you don't want to piss off a techie. Those people are cut from a different stone, a rare and weird stone that will kill you in your sleep... a lot.

Thirdly, you need detail, but not too much. The set for "Boner Cat

and the Cavern of Lame" is simple yet functional. We have one very large portion which takes four burly men to move, but other than that, it's subtle. The "Cavern" is most definitely a cavern but not so much that it steals the scene. Theatre is about people, and your set should help emphasize those on stage, not the stage itself.

AUGUST 21 I THINK I'M PREGNANT

I've never been good at promoting my shows, because I just can't take the whole advertising industry seriously. I'm not saying that you should do things half-assed, but you should always have an element of levity to your self-aggrandizing. For example, I was interviewed by a Mr. Mingus Tourette for his website:

MT: "Now, we know that sketch comedy is art. Is this (your show) more art?"

TW: "This is more 'theatre,' but would I say it is more art? I could say that, but then I could also say that I can fly but that wouldn't make it true. I mean, I've thought about flying and art but still, those are just abstract ideas. I know that it is entertaining, I know that it is thought-provoking, and I know that there are parts that are funny. Now, you can't milk a cow without touching its private parts, so there will be

moments of discomfort...so yeah, it's art."

To me, that is what the Fringe is about. It's about being your own artist and just trying to say your piece with clarity and in an entertaining way. If people don't understand you, then you have to make a decision. Do they not get what you are saying, and if so, should you still be in the theatre? I think you can find the grey area between over-the-top and understandable, even if it takes you a while.

AUGUST 22 RAD THEATRE EQUATION

In lieu of the opening night jitters, I created a theorem on how to quantify the reaction of audiences as opposed to the efforts of the players. If the players do their jobs and the audience shows up there are a few possibilities:

The radness of the actors (!) is equal or lesser than the radness of the proportional audience (?). If ? accepts the radness of !, then the optimal rad quotient supersedes the required norms of rad. If the radness of ! is greater than the radness of ?, then the outcome of said radness declines but not in the eyes of !. If the radness of ! is equal to the radness of ?, then radness becomes normalcy and everyone just sees another nice show. If the

radness of ! towers over the expectations of ? then you got yourself a very rad show. So ! + ? x rad = robust enjoyment.

AUGUST 23 YOUR STRIDE AND REVIEWS THAT ADD TO THE CANTER

Around the second show you start to Jones for the third. You read what people say about you in the local rags, and take it into consideration. If you take it too seriously, then you won't last long, so you give yourself a series of slaps to the face in order to regain focus. Someone tells you that they read something good about your play and you are surprised. "Really? I thought that night sucked." And the joke's on you because you really did think the show sucked, and you get a little jump in your step and you think you can do no wrong.

But then you do wrong and somebody points it out, and you contemplate the relevance of reviewers and you're filled with anger, and you kill a puppy and then you're sad because puppies are rad. And then you cry a little bit on the inside, but then you realize that you've got to be on stage in five minutes and you refocus and the minutes become seconds and the seconds become nothing and there is a light, a brilliant light.... ☺

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- 27 - DIVINE BROWN - U SHOOK ME
- 28 - MASSARI - BE EASY
- 29 - FESSIONAL - SUMMER VIBES
- 30 - MARIAH CAREY - WE BELONG TOGETHER
- 31 - BOW WOW/ CIARA - LIKE YOU
- 32 - BEDOUIN SOUNDCLASH - WHEN THE NIGHT FEELS MY SONG
- 33 - JULLY BLACK - SWEAT OF YOUR BROW
- 34 - DESTINY'S CHILD - CATER 2 U
- 35 - R. KELLY/ THE GAME - PLAYAS ONLY
- 36 - PRAS MICHEL - STILL HAVEN'T

Excaliber Unplugged (9)—This play presents itself as a mixture of *The DaVinci Code* and *A Knight's Tale*, and yes, it's as bad as it sounds. Arthurian mythology is awkwardly combined with Tarot mysticism in this embarrassing comedy that tries desperately to play various *Deuce Bigalo*-esque juvenile gags—lesbianism, incest, cross-dressing and the requisite dick/sword double entendres—for cheap laughs, ultimately bewildering and offending its audience, some of whom stormed out midway. Amateurish performances and poor staging don't help matters much, but even seasoned professionals wouldn't be able to do much better with this mess of a play. 6* (RM)

Far Away (9)—Director Stephen Heatly prefaces *Far Away* with a note about the "creeping paranoia" plaguing our increasingly fear-gripped society. Heatly has staged the play as an allegory for modern living, and the parallel works reasonably well, with the play's characters speaking ominously about unspecified threats and increasingly complicated alliances. "The cats are on the side of the French!" we are warned, which is no more absurd as a concept than the ubiquitous "axis of evil." Admittedly, a meditation on the absurdity of post-9/11 life isn't exactly an inspired concept, but *Far Away* deals with its central questions aptly. 3.5★ (RM)

Felix Listens to the World (9)—This play makes absolutely no sense. Don't let this be a deterrent, though: *Felix Listens to the World* is a must see, if only to marvel at its superlative physical theatre and innovative staging. Melbourne's The Suitcase Royal theatre troop have produced this puppet show on acid about Felix's love Rose sailing away in a tea-cup and his quest to find her, but the plot is largely immaterial, as the true joy of the show lies in being constantly surprised, enchanted and entertained for a woefully short half hour by this surrealist cartoon acted out by real people. 3.5★ (RM)

Gags 4 the Masses (10)—From the beginning of his set, Benjamin Crellin charmed and excited the audience with his accent, attire and clever social commentary. Riffing on everything from British tabloids and Jesus' s day job (pirate or pimp, you decide), the Kiwi comic's delivery was always spot on, at times wetting the patrons who sat in the front row with excited sprays of spit. Even though his routine touches on the touchiest of subjects—religion, terrorism and Toronto—he's probably the most intelligent Kiwi pirate comedian you'll ever have the pleasure of listening to. 3.5★ (TK)

Gloomology (11)—Looking like he has just stepped off the cobblestone streets of Charles Dickens' London, Mr. Slurch is here to educate you and creep you out. Don't even try to get smart-alecky with Mr. Slurch. He has ways of dealing with disobedient children such as yourself. It is very easy to forgive him for being so brutally honest because he is charming and hilarious in his own cannibalistic sort of way. You will leave the theater with a renewed sense of weirdness. 3.5★ (SSo)

Gordon's Big Bald Head - Bubonic Playground (13)—Mark Meer and Jacob Banigan are back in Gordon's Big Bald Head's latest offering, *Bubonic Playground*. This show is minimalist sketch-com at its best; Meer and Banigan create vivid, hilarious situations with few props and costumes. Meer's impassioned and ironic plea for an end to "joke-sharing" because it's "killing the sketch comedy industry" was one of the highlights. It was so good that I've decided to take it to heart and not describe any of the other sketches. It's hilarious and well worth the money. 3.5★ (EL)

The Great PreTenors (11)—The joke about Pavarotti's gluttony was not exactly fresh off the shelf to begin with, and in this show it is repeated at least five times. Nonetheless, this show is still entertaining. No, these are not the best tenors in the world, but "Luciano Paparazzi", "Placebo Domingo" and "Jose Whocarras" are inge-

nious at mimicking all the mannerisms of their more famous counterparts. There should be some sort of special prize awarded to Trent Worthington ("Whocarras") just for the expression of earnest fascination with which he stares at his colleagues when they sing. 3.5★ (SSo)

Grumplestock's (4)—A play about marionettes who search for their master and end up in an urban dystopia, *Grumplestock's* is unstrung by its Rumpelstiltsch dialogue ("You four deserve any deserving that deserves your company") and frenetic action. The actors nicely convey the rigid, jerky motions of marionettes, but this rambling, hyperactive play never really fleshes out its ideas. The cast quick-changes into different roles, but scenes remain disconnected and the play's various allegories are shallow and confused. Some might call it expressionism; I got the impression of emotions obscured by yelling and a discomfiting eagerness-to-please. 1★ (BG)

Hamlet (F)—Two-and-a-half hours with a gloomy, great Dane in a church gym may not be everyone's cup of poison, but this is a stately and intimate production. The acoustics are spotty but the atmosphere is excellent, with the performers inches away from the surrounding audience in this bare-bones version. Hamlet is played excellently, as he seems to be working out his thoughts before our eyes, scarcely believing that only he sees the treachery around him. An aus-



tere, visceral adaptation that shows that worthwhile theatre comes from passionate, thoughtful performances filling a space with genuine emotion. 3.5★ (BG)

Having My Cabaret and Eating It Too (3)—Los Angeles ate Yolanda Yott for lunch. In this hour-long monologue, she talks about her failed attempts to be a musician, actor and standup comedian. The failed-actor-in-L.A. theme is not new; in fact, it's been done thousands of times. But Yott's easygoing delivery makes the material fresh enough to pass the time without too much bother. When Yott introduces Mizz Lucie, her ventriloquist dummy, the show takes off. Really, this would have got more stars if Mizz Lucie had made an entrance earlier on in the routine. 3★ (SSA)

Heal Thyself (1)—Living with a debilitating disease like Alzheimer's is obviously a tragic circumstance for anyone, but what about the people living with and caring for them? Surely they suffer too, yet they are often overlooked in the scenario. Drawing on personal experience, writers/actors Carlynn Reed and Jonathon Neville explore the complex relationship between care-givers and takers through acting and dance. It's obviously heavy subject matter, but they manage to keep it light and entertaining while delivering a powerful message at the same time. 3★ (PD)

Hip Hop 4 Dummeez (1)—I've always found the whole white-guys-listening-to-hip-

hop thing a little ridiculous. Apparently I'm not the only one: *Hip Hop 4 Dummeez*, Jerome Sable and Eli Batalion—Vowel Movement and Bushman, respectively—promise to explain hip hop in five easy lessons through the scholarly use of a "Pizover Point" presentation and numerous surprisingly skillfully executed raps. People with no interest in hip hop might find a lot of the gags flying over their heads, but anyone who's turned on MuchMusic in the last ten years will probably find something to laugh about here. 3.5★ (RM)

Hollywood Grade Eight (3)—This is really two plays in one; in the first half of the production, performer Sarah Martyn details her failed acting career, and her story is clichéd. But in the second half of the production, Martyn tells of finding her true lot in life—teaching drama to a group of rather troubled students, and it's in this part of the production that Martyn goes from cliché to captivating. If she wouldn't have deluged me with all the needless self-pity early on in the play, I might just have cared more about the end. 3★ (SSA)

Hull Block (3)—Norton Mah uses the restoration of Boyle-McCauley's Hull Block as some kind of analogy for the survival of family and his culture. Mah's muddled work is so ill-conceived, and he isn't so much presenting a play as he is just telling us about his family, how he likes government plans to help fund historical buildings (exciting) and what he hates about modern Chinese-Canadian culture. But he did give a Fringe-goer five bucks in an audience participation portion of the show. So at least he has a heart, it's just the "acting" and "writing" parts that need a lot of work. 6* (SSA)

Jem Rolls' Charm Offensive (10)—Going through a list of a dozen or so of original politically and socially charged poems with a schizophrenic's raw energy, Rolls showed both his charming (his British accent) and offensive (his British teeth) sides. Even though I was probably the only one in the audience who would have preferred to read his work on the page, there was something undeniably original about watching a middle-aged Brit enthusiastically sweating his way through intelligent prose. 3.5★ (TK)

The Jewish Princess Diaries (10)—This show is an excellent exploration of what values we learn in life and those that we're born with and can't erase. Jewish hipster Jessica Anne Pearlman (aka JAP) is turning 30 and questioning why she needs to find a nice, Jewish guy to settle down with, even though she's not kosher and doesn't attend Temple. Tania Levy's dialogue is verbose and sometimes her intelligent, Canuck-infused jokes land flat. But her performance as one of the many girls out there who are lonely, only in their own minds, hits the mark. 3.5★ (TK)

Jolly Roger (9)—Kiwi Jonno Katz introduces his one-man show as "a true story that I have altered beyond all recognition and proceeds to use puppets and physical comedy to take the audience on an irreverent trip through his psyche. Katz invites audience interjection throughout the show and the informal atmosphere suits the cheeky script well; although, encouraging theatergoers to interrupt a performance at will leads to as many awkward moments as humorous ones. While the ultimate destination of his journey is a little ridiculous, Katz is a fun performer to watch, and the strengths easily outweigh its weaknesses. 3.5★ (RM)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat (H)—This Biblical tale set to music about sibling rivalry and deception could do worse than the treatment it got from the youth of Alberta Lyric Theatre. They simply can get away with more, and part of the joy in watching this performance was seeing the kids doing it all so earnestly. James Sloan absolutely shone in his countrified, Elvis-ified and even reggae-ified versions of some of the songs, making me see

SEE PAGE 40

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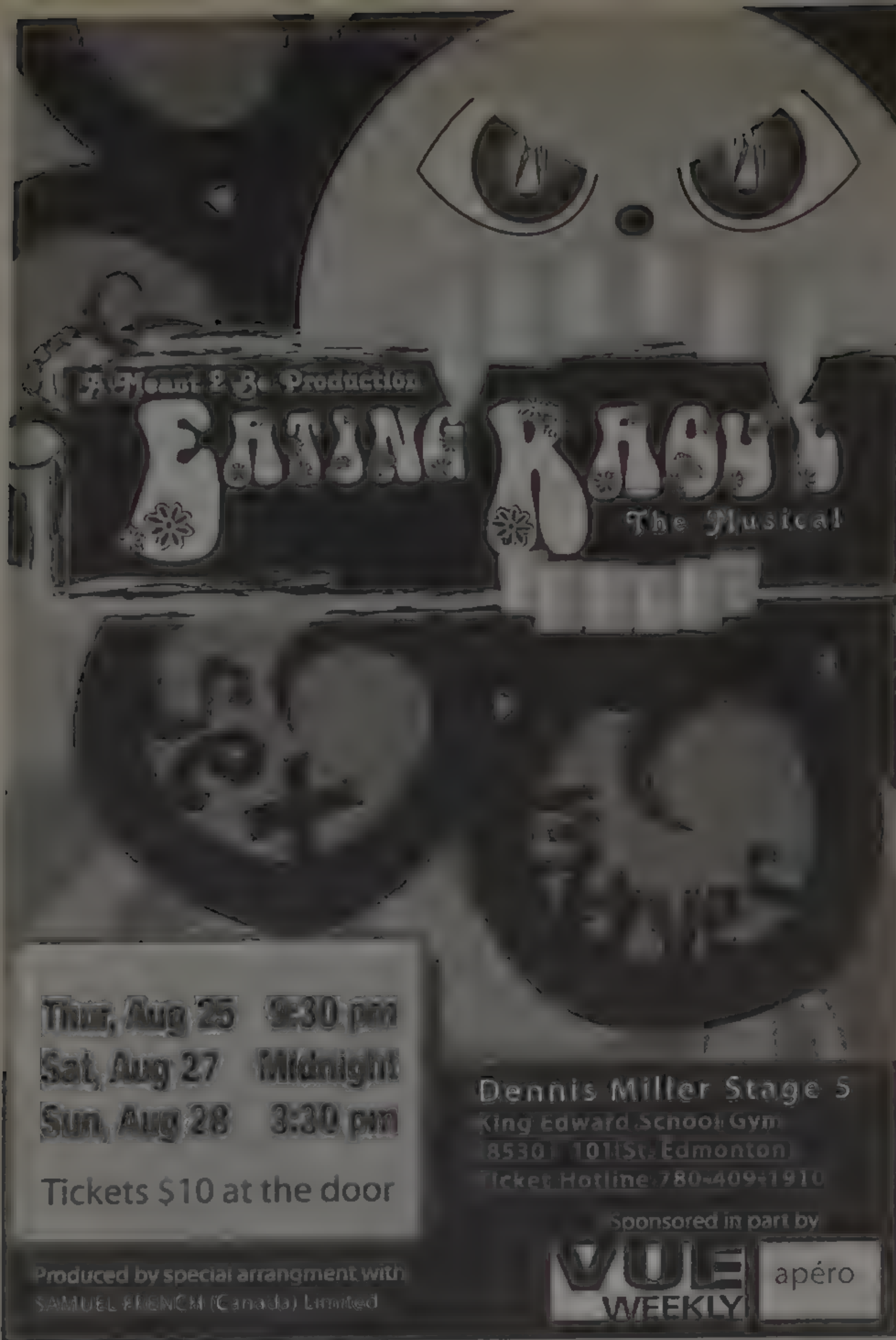
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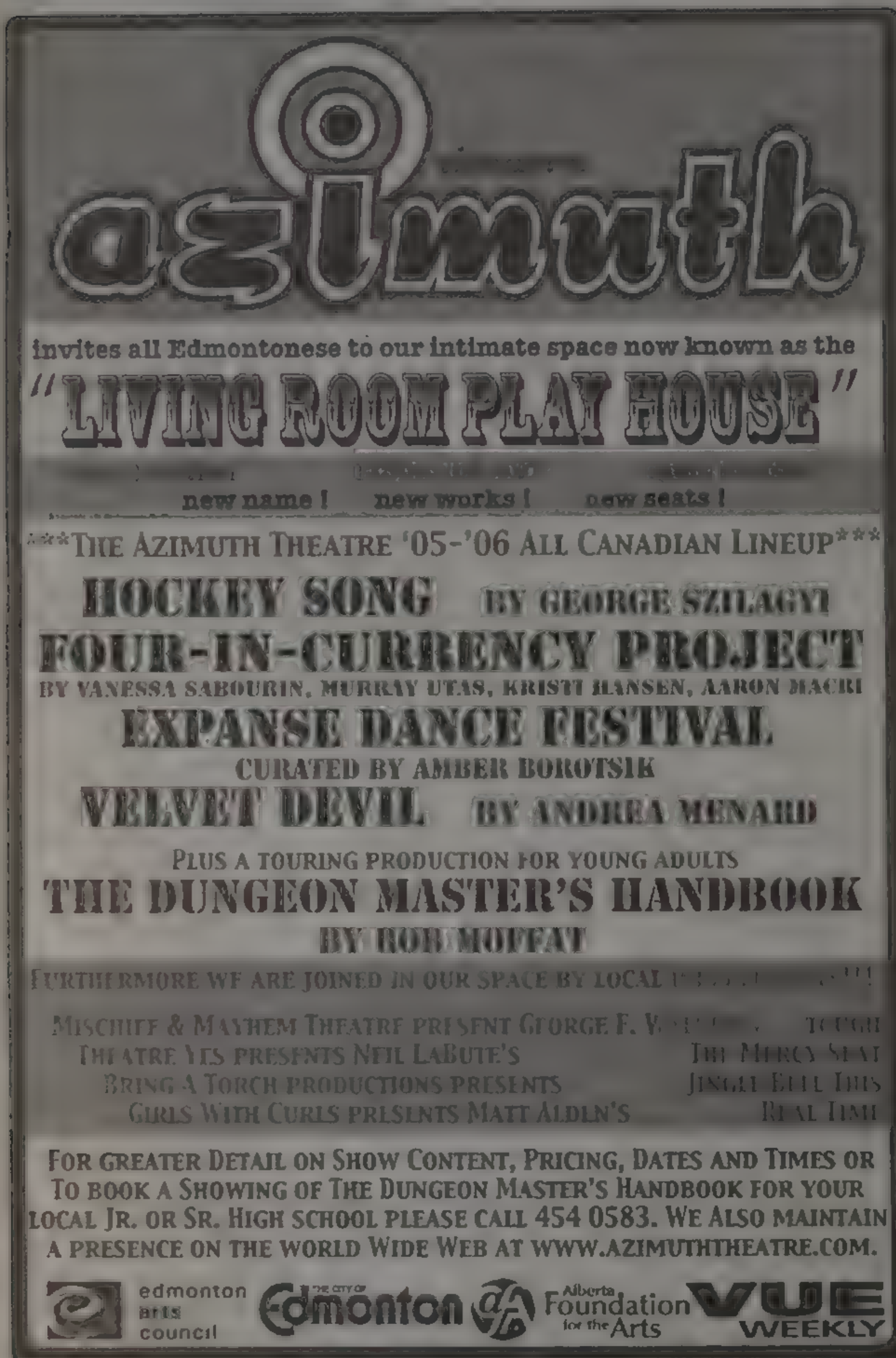
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Continued from page 45

some uncanny similarities between this musical and Phish. ★★★ (CN)

Journey to the Centre of a Doughnut (2)—If you crossed the expressionistic world of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* with the ridiculousness of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, you might end up with something like *Journey to the Centre of a Doughnut*, a bizarre trip to... the centre of a doughnut. The two actors give it their best: Kevin Cheung has the role of straight man down, leaving plenty of room for Wes Schofield to run wild, but, ultimately, the play is about as filling as its namesake—there's just too much padding for it to have much effect. ★★ (EM)

The Key to Violet's Apartment (2) Paul Matwychuk's one-hander is a thoughtful comedy that will have both the men and women in the audience considering its meaning—though, likely coming to considerably different conclusions. Matwychuk is just right as the "ordinary guy," who delves into the mysteries of women as he recalls a pair of conversations. His manner is so disarming and his details so rich that it's easy to picture the absent characters right up there on stage with him. Ultimately, this play about the female enigma may be even more insightful about men. ★★★ (EM)

The Kingship of NNNNorpl! (12)—What would you call a plot that takes you to a kingdom where a tyrant king, with a purple ear and dressed in a superman costume, forces his subjects to kiss him on the knee and eat only eggs? Wacky as it is, the play is filled with colorful costumes, outlandish storybook characters, and funny, interactive dialogue. It's a bit odd, but this play succeeds where it counts: it makes the smallest members of the audience giggle with delight. ★★★ (AM)

The Last 5 Years (11)—Written and composed by Tony-Award winner Jason Robert Brown, this poignant but not overly sentimental musical tells the story of Jamie, a talented writer whose career is on the rise, and Cathy, his actress wife who feels neglected because of his popularity. Showing a remarkable depth of thought and feeling, the story interlinks the themes of love and time. We see Jamie's version of events from beginning to end, while Cathy's storyline moves backwards in time from their breakup to their first date. The beautiful melodies and first-rate acting make this a must-see. ★★★★★ (SSO)

La Stras Mona (2)—Julia Rigaux seems like a very nice person. She took the time to introduce herself and chat with everyone who entered the room prior to the performance of her one-woman show. That said, the play itself is an odd and barely comprehensible collection of sequences wherein Rigaux assumes several roles. There are glimpses of humor, but the point is obscured by dialogue repeated ad nauseam. I'm sure it's a roundabout commentary on capitalism or some other weighty topic, but it might be too bizarre for its own good. ★ (EM)

Letters @ Large (2)—Remember the bit in *Summer School* when the kids write to a sunglasses company and get a whole box of shades for their efforts? Well, it inspired Jeff Sinclair to do the same—only his letters are ridiculous, fictional affairs. The responses, however, are real and frequently hilarious. Rather than performing them, Sinclair reads his letters, followed by the respective response. The show might benefit from being tightened up in places—Sinclair stumbles occasionally, and there is no real build-up towards the uproarious ending, but that's not so bad when the material is this funny. ★★★ (EM)

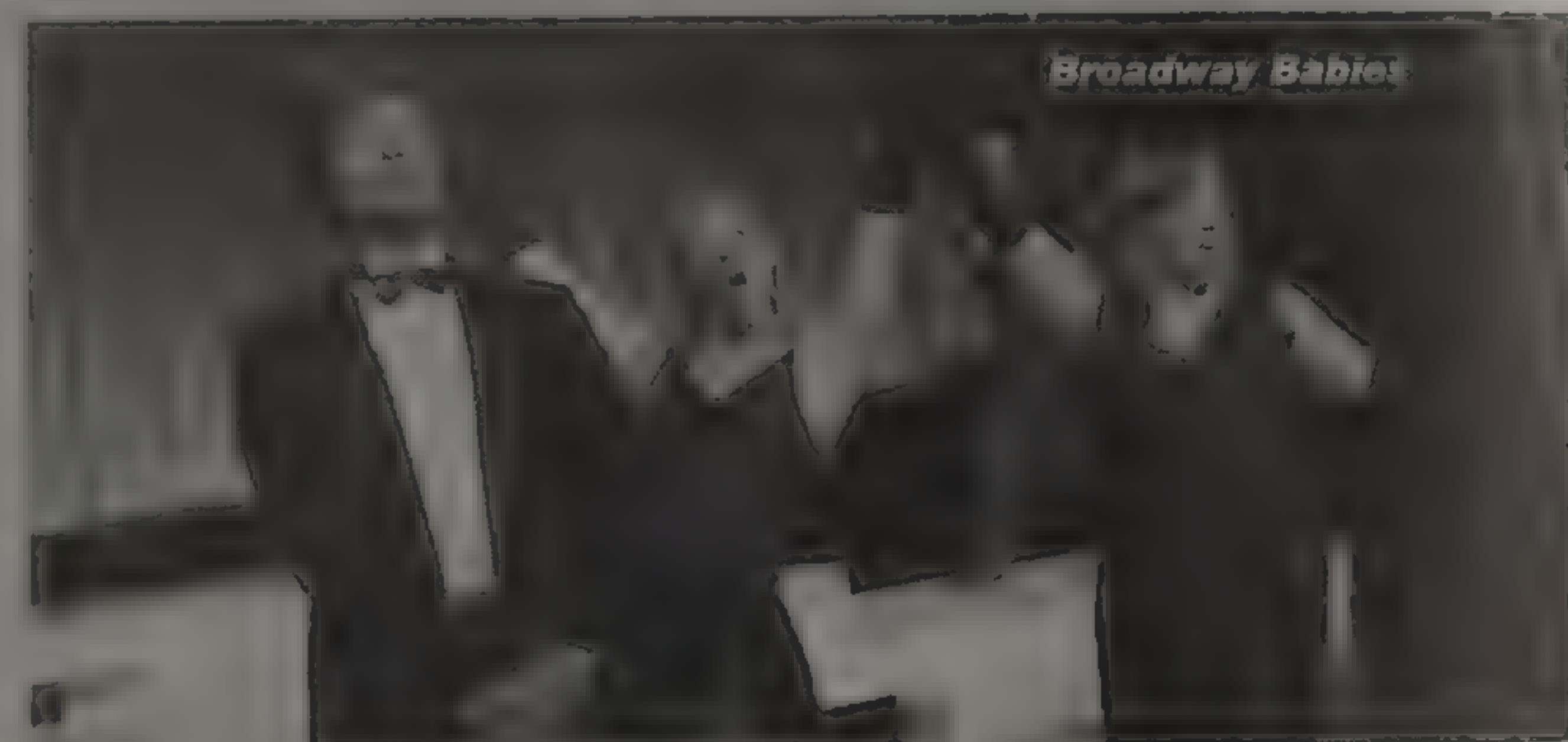
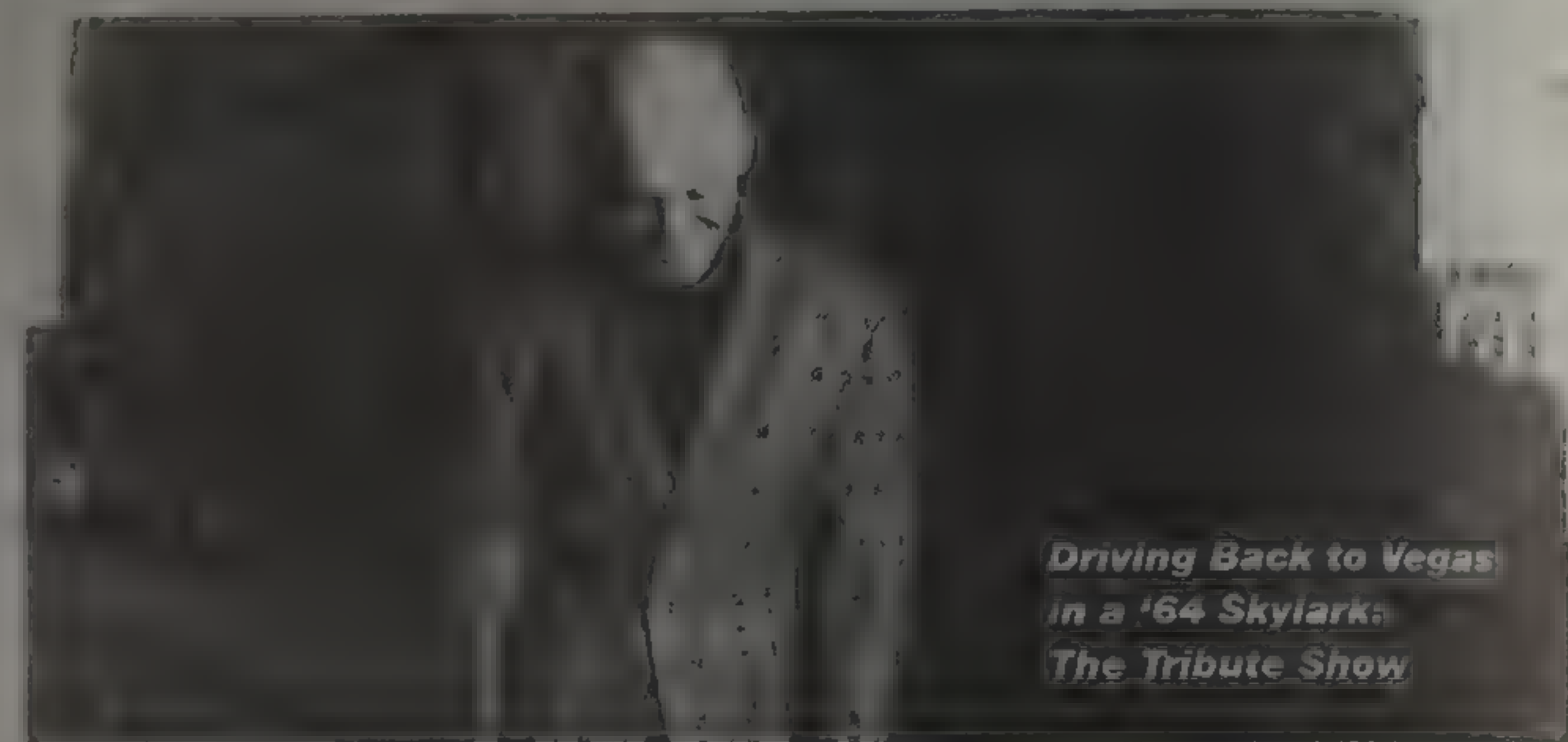
Little Women (6)—In this classic coming-of-age story about four sisters set during the American Civil War, we have a solid script. Acted by students of the Society for Stage-works Academy of Performing Arts, this show suffers slightly from the lack of depth inherent in younger actors. However, the roles of independent Jo and the sickly Beth are captured wonderfully, and the overall result is charming. ★★ (CN)

Live From the Apocalypse (8)—Opening with the world learning it only has one week until Armageddon, this play tells the stories of a group of high-school friends, a self-styled suicide prevention social worker and an elderly couple as they cope with the news and learn about the value of human connections. Laugh-out-loud funny throughout and surprisingly tender when it needs to be, *Live From the Apocalypse* owes more than a little to the Don McKellar film *Last Night*, but hey—you could model yourself after worse movies, and there's still enough originality there to make it unique. ★★★ (CB)

Love at the Movies (5)—This show sure looks okay in the beginning: there are some nice, if not spectacular, renditions of musical hits. The actors are all earnest young pretty types, whose every move seems designed for a press photo. Notable are John Yun, as Tony, who gets the show's only laugh and Kristen Mellott, who sings *Chicago's* "When You're Good to Mama" with standout flair. The problem is the plot, a barely-there, not-quite excuse for more singing. There's not much conflict and no resolution, and without plot,

kickstart her own career by appropriating that of another. All six of Caswell's characters are lively and over-the-top, but never obnoxious. And Caswell's gusto—the proof is in her shirt, sopping with sweat 20 minutes in—is as entertaining as her fast-paced script. The frothy fun turns serious with some commentary about art and the human necessity for tragedy—it's an odd turn, but Caswell's winning enough to pull it off with out any fuss. ★★★ (LC)

Mike and Russ (13)—Mike and Russ are two young men who go on seemingly endless rants about inane topics, and when they're not acting as mouthpieces for all of the little things the author finds annoying they're waiting in a doctor's office in anticipation of Russ's prostate exam. Thoroughly homophobic and immature, they agonize over the idea of a doctor putting his finger in poor Russ's behind and pontificate about whether or not black men really do have bigger penises. Haven't these guys ingested enough pop culture to know that this is a really tired stereotype? ★ (EL)



the songs just go on and on. ★★ (CA)

Made In Japa (13)—Toy company employees discover that the words "Made in Japa" have mistakenly been inscribed on their latest action figures in this comedy written and performed by students from Victoria Comp. The last thing I want to do is discourage young talent, and I applaud this young company for taking a stab at social commentary, but the script falls flat and often reiterates facts that the audience already knows. The actors are very young and have a lot of potential, but their performances in this piece seem awkward and forced. Look for these guys when they're a bit more experienced. ★ (EL)

Man of the House (5)—This is the tale of a burglar interrupted in his task by squabbling family members. It's not a bad idea, though why the burglar answers every doorbell and phone call is never explained. The show generates a few laughs, most notably from Jay Hennig as a dim police officer, and Daniel Johnstone and Gizelle Danyk as a pair of star-crossed young lovers, who throw kisses at each other in every scene. The characters are a little one-note, but the real problem is the momentum. The play never really gets going, and the technical difficulties don't help. ★★ (CA)

Maudlin Dementia Returns to the Stage (6)—Chris Caswell gets the popular one-woman comedy formula down pat in her play, a story of one actress's attempt to

MoonSnake (13)—The moon has unfurled into a giant snake that has the ability to destroy entire cities; the American government takes advantage of the destruction and blames terrorists. The premise of *MoonSnake* had potential, and there were some funny scenes of people taking advantage of the tragic situation (one character sells MoonSnake insurance); however, the satire runs out of steam halfway through when the government suddenly admits to MoonSnake's existence and the plot becomes all about destroying it. *MoonSnake* is too long, as many of the characters and scenes are extraneous, and the ending leaves you wondering: what's the point? ★★ (EL)

Nepo (8)—Burdened with terribly unfunny jokes, a confusing script and an inexplicably present and mediocre bar band that plays poorly-levelled stadium-rock covers in between acts, this fumbled quasi-morality tale about the corruption of a naive small town girl who takes a job at a liquor store is just plain misguided. No real chemistry or connections is made between any of the characters; in fact, I wasn't even sure the small-town girl and that guy with the Oilers jersey were a couple until she awkwardly blurted out "I had an abortion!" during a conversation late in the game. Meh. ★ (CB)

Neruda Nude (1)—They say the difference between pornography and art is that pornography is in focus. But in *Neruda Nude* the naked bodies of the actors are all in focus and yet it's most definitely art, great art at

Never Swim Alone (1)—Beneath the surface of this funny, thought provoking play lies a sinister secret just dying to get out. For the most part it's a giant pissing contest between two childhood mates played out on a beach, with a lovely lifeguard keeping score as they try to prove who's the biggest, most well adjusted and successful man. But as they tear into each other with ruthlessness and personal attacks, they only manage to prove just how screwed up both their lives have become. ★★★★★ (PD)

No Entry (4)—David Owen's death-black comedy about a mild-mannered Dilbert-type who can see the ghost of an '80s valley girl starts slowly but picks up steam and comes fully to life by its un-bitter end. The funny bits are ragged at first, with a forced rhythm and some flat lines, but by the time the Grim Reaper arrives, *No Entry* has found its offbeat stride. Characters' monologues and a raucous scene with the ghost, an angel, a demon, and a sex-obsessed psychiatrist make this *Revenge of the Scythe* Sense worth seeing, for the dead people alone.

★★★★ (BG)

Noonday Demons (8)—Featuring Fringe and Edmonton theatre vets Dave Clarke and Patrick Howarth, this mounting of acclaimed British playwright Peter Barnes's provocative skewering of the vanity of personal sacrifice and the quest for religious piety is as deliciously sarcastic and darkly witty as it should be. Howarth puts on a brilliant one-man show as St. Eusebius, a cave-dwelling monk who must fight off regular possessions by the devil, and Dave Clarke's turn as a rival monk who shows up to claim the cave is as hilarious as it is full of brimstone. Most certainly worth checking out. ★★★★★ (CB).

Nostalgia Trip Tlc (13)—This show uses every performance art cliché in the book: writhing around naked on the ground, horrible off-key singing, meaningless streams of consciousness, and screaming and crying, all set to "muzak." *It just doesn't mean anything.* I'm all for experimentation in the theatre, but this is completely incoherent, pretentious nonsense that somehow got Canada Council funding and took two years to create. Yikes. 6+ (EL)

Notre Dame of Paris - The Musical
(1)—With its lavish costumes and diverse, talented cast, this adaptation of Victor Hugo's classic begins strong with some powerful opening scenes. But after a while the drawn-out story of redemption, love and betrayal gets bogged down by its own ambition, and it's a bit tough to sit through. How long does it really take for Quasimodo to do away with the conniving, self-righteous priest anyway? In the end, I wanted to climb up on the bell tower and do it myself, just to make them stop singing. ★★ (PD)

November Women (4)—The women of the title are Eve (Trish Lorenz), a high-strung social worker, and her latest charge Darlene (Robyn Hildahl), an incessantly sunny parolee. Their initially awkward and formal relationship

Nude Girlz (8)—Aware of the fact that the territory trodden in *Nude Girlz* is far from groundbreaking, Angela Potvin, Natasha Meilunas and Robbie Berniuk instead turn their attentions to putting on an energetic, provocative and thoroughly enjoyable play about a couple of strippers who try to get the women at their club to unionize. *Nude Girlz* has fun with the material—unfortunately at the expense of an ending that works. No, stating your awareness of the lack of resolution doesn't make it okay; it does, however, make it a Fringe play. And a pretty good one. ★★ ★ (CB)

Pain: So Funny It Hurts (10)— Suzanne Willet's jokes are either dated (Billy Joel's "DUI") or recycled from Seinfeld reruns (the Sponge). Only one joke, comparing Fiona Apple to a jar of pickles in the fridge (they both just sit there, sweating), made me laugh. Never in my life have I felt more justified in heckling a performer, especially one who still thinks it's funny to complain about wearing a thong. ★½ (TK)

Parallel Lives (10)—Written by Kathy Najimy (*King of the Hill*) and Mo Gaffney (*Absolutely Fabulous*), this show is a series of sketches of two women in one zany situation after another. Whether they're supreme beings, clueless Jewish widows or gossipy teens, it's all funny, especially since actors Sandy Paddick and Karen Cogan have personalities almost as big as the play's original actors. Everything about this play works, especially the musical interludes where both actors perform songs with exaggerated facial expressions, dramatic vocals and rad dance routines that they must have cooked up one night at a slumber party. ★★★★★ (TK)

Patti Fedy In... Lovers Rock! (B)—We all went to high school with a girl like Patti Fedy—a spaz who's unwavering sense of self hurts more than it helps. As Patti, Emelia Symington Fedy borrows from the Molly Shannon school of comedy, recounting the day she broke up with her best friend Margaret with snippets of interpretive dance. It's hilarious, but when Fedy becomes a victim of a practical joke and her real tears sparkle in the spotlight, you'll feel compelled to hug her, then call your bestest friend in the whole wide world and tell them you love them. ★★★★★ (TK)

pause (A)—The idea here is of a chemist, his research, the findings and the conclusion for the hypothesis “Option 4”; a chemical that attempts to combat the scientific theory of fight, flight or freeze. At the risk of sounding like a close-minded old git, this play left me with nothing but annoyance and confusion. With bouts of brilliant acting infused with high-energy physical comedy, this show has potential but instead flops around like the central motif. The ideas were interesting, but there were too many of them. Overall, it was dissatisfying and overwhelming. ★ (IP)

Penelope (12)—The story of Penelope is the story of all children, not to mention some adults, who are afraid of the creepy spiders, slimy worms, and hairy monsters that lurk behind closet doors. But in this play the unexpected happens. Penelope gets to know some of those nasty creatures, and in knowing them, she overcomes her fears. Like a good old-fashioned fable that comes down through the centuries, this fun-filled, pun-packed story belies a deep inner core. It speaks about life, courage and a time worn truth: not all that is different and foreign need be feared. ★★★★★ (AM)

Pirates on the Fringe (11)—Based on Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*,

this '60s version replaces the pirates with hippies preparing for an anti-war protest on General Stanley's lawn. The outrageously silly plot involves a test of hippie loyalty for young Frederick, who is torn between his love for the general's daughter Mabel, and his sense of duty to his groovy family. Most of the performers will not impress you with wineglass-shattering vocals, but they will impress you with their ability to gracefully play out scenes involving over fifteen people on such a tiny stage. ★★☆☆ (SSO)

The Plato Musical (1)—Plato eh? Must be some deep philosophical ramblings set to music, sounds interesting. Wrong. Dead wrong. It's actually an acronym for Plot-less Lively Absolutely Terrible Over-the-top Musical, and if anything other than the plot-less part was true, it might not be so bad. It's like watching the latest Disney movie, but instead of some decent animation with a few annoying songs thrown in, it's all annoying songs. The young cast does have potential, but they've bitten off more than they can chew here. ★ (PD)

pornStar (6)—Shannon Larson is plenty of characters in this revival of Chris Craddock's play, but the best is 14-year-old suicide victim Kate Kirkenchuck (sister to the titular accidental porn star/upright Saskatchewan librarian). From the bowels of hell, Kate gives us the skinny on her eternal sentence: monkeys playing banjos, giant squids with Hitler tentacles, Earl's patios (all its sounds way more clever on stage, honest). Craddock's

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gag-heavy script, and lively performances from Larson and Chris Fassbender should keep audiences interested outside of the appeal of an underage hellian. ★★★★★ (LC)

Pulling The Wool (4)—A comic drama about commercial media conspiracy, this play offers clashing ideals, mixed messages, and a talking TV head. Edgy news writer Alan's home life is nicely contrasted with his male workplace, where he has cross-purpose conversations with a manipulating statistician. A fairly novel work with enough sharp and off-beat lines to keep the somewhat vague plot intriguing, although the performances are a bit tight at times. Metadialogues, confused inner voices, role-switching, Freudian slips, and archaic cultural jokes make this an entertaining spin on Chomsky-esque notions about the media, and the conclusion is satisfyingly unsettling. ★★★ (BG)

The Pushcart Peddlers (13)—A recent Russian immigrant with the unfortunate last name of Shitzman teams up with a slick banana salesman to take over the lucrative world of fruit vending in this satire of the American dream. The energetic and charismatic actors nail the ironic style of the piece, and underneath the cute and funny surface of this script is a surprisingly subversive critique of capitalism. Unfortunately, Shitzman's transformation from a naïve, likeable character into a ruthless businessman happens a little too quickly for it to be completely satisfying; still, *Pushcart Peddlers* is worth checking out. ★★★ (EL)

Radio Collar (2) Look out rat race; here comes Emily Pearlman, and she doesn't like what she's seeing. She takes aim at the frenetic pace of modern life through the lead character's relationships with her family and an Oldies AM radio station. Pearlman is likable and engaging as she sets out to save the station from becoming another one of those "'80s, '90s, whatever" monsters. The plot

moves languidly at first, focusing on the mundane aspects of life until the character's child-like enthusiasm turn her small protest into a movement, helping her find meaning in the nostalgia of her own memories. ★★★ (EM)

The Return of the Glass Slipper (12)—This funky, modern day musical is performed by kids for kids. They come from Dramatic Learning, a company devoted to educating young artists. In an exuberant hour of fun, dance and laughter, they turn this familiar story upside down. (For example, the usually frilly, effeminate fairy godmother here has a fetish for sixties music and suddenly bursts into a dance routine to Deep Purple.) The young performers occasionally lack polish and voice projection, but what they lack in experience they make up in infectious enthusiasm and boundless energy. ★★★★★ (AM)

The Rise and Fall of Bloody Redemption (10)—Effectively mocking and worshipping Christianity at the same time, Jason Neufeld's play is an original take on what it means to be pop-culture Christian. Telling the tale of a feud between a Christian rockstar and a televangelist, Neufeld takes on both roles, clearly distinguishing the slouching, tired rocker and manic tele-prophet with his sharp speech and intense eyes. Filled with biblical contradictions and theological challenges, this work delivers a smart, hilarious and thought-provoking play that will make you question both the existence of God and Amy Grant's association with the Devil. ★★★★★ (TK)

Rocketman (B)—This one-man comedy interactive extravaganza about searching for love in the universe from author/writer Russell Bennett was engagingly fun. Rocketman descends from outer space onto earth with one thing in mind—love, how to find it, build it, keep it and how Neil Diamond seems to know the way through song. The gauntlet of jokes and audience participation

in this part improv, part written act left me wondering who had more fun—us, or the man in tights on stage. ★★★★★ (JP)

Rocking Out (8)—A self-proclaimed "concept album for the stage," *Rocking Out* offers a series of vignettes from local writers about music, musicians and fans. Interspersed with musical interludes courtesy of the James T Kirks are some great comic scenes, usually involving Shannon Blanchet and Clarice Eckford, and moments of well-executed drama as in "Indulge Me," Ryan Hughes' effective scene about a fading folk musician negotiating his festival contract. But at 90 minutes, *Rocking Out*, like many concept albums, feels a little flabby and overindulgent; four or five fewer sketches, like David Belke's obvious and pedantic "Maternity Mosh" scene, and this would have gotten another star. ★★★ (CB)

Scratch (3)—OK, it's improv, so the show I saw last weekend will really have no bearing on the show you may see this weekend. But if Stephen Kent and Arlen Konopaki's Sunday performance was a true measure of the duo's improv brilliance, I'll assure you that buying a ticket will be money well spent. The pair have a unique chemistry, and the duo's practice of stopping a skit in mid-act if anything really offensive is said—and then forcing the perpetrator to apologize to the audience—only adds to the comic possibilities. Simply put, this is the best improv show I've ever seen at the Fringe. ★★★★★ (SSA)

Self-Storage (3)—If anything, *Self-Storage* proves that Gillian Stevens-Guille, co-writer and star of this one-woman show, is one hell of a physical actress. With a bare minimum of help, her shimmies, dances, simulated sex acts and hysterical tantrums help bring her character—a confused woman with serious self-esteem issues—to life. The story asks a lot of the audience; it's a story of a woman balancing on the edge of sanity. We have to treat an imaginary friend as an antihero. In the hands of the wrong actress, this could be a disaster. But Stevens-Guille's work makes this an engaging effort. ★★★ (SSA)

serve (4)—This play about service workers on the edge of going postal dishes out some overcooked comedy. Characters devolve into caricatures (yokel, lisping gay man, pothead, a Scotsman in a bank, etc.) and any serious statements about the frustrations of serving customers are undermined by cartoonish situations (an astrophysicist Ph.D. works in a department store; obnoxious Americans are insanely accommodating to a rude waiter). Still, some of the workers' vengeful inner voices ring true and the cast carries off their serviette-thin roles withchutzpah. More sketch-based than fully-formed, *serve* caters to the generously tipping Fringe customer. ★★ (BG)

Shimmering Piece of Glass (2) The bathroom as sanctuary. That premise might lend itself to any number of tasteless gags in Hollywood, but in the hands of Matthew Bowen, it becomes the basis for an impressively mature work that explores the concepts of self and freedom through the concerns of a young adult fighting to find his place in the world without compromising and conforming. The play does tend to meander at times, but Bowen himself is captivating on stage, proving that he is a talent worth watching as he develops his voice further as both writer and actor. ★★ (EM)

simple gifts (stage 9)—First off, *simple gifts* is an unfortunate, cloyingly earnest title. Thankfully, this is the only possible area for criticism in this genuinely touching, witty, intensely personal one-woman show by Tracey Penner. From the moment she bursts on to the minimalist but brilliantly utilized set, Penner is flawless, playing her family members as they react to her decision to leave her hometown of Steinbeck, Manitoba to attend university in the big city. This kind of emotionally charged show could have easily slipped into embarrassing melodrama, but Penner's obvious skill as a performer and writer makes *simple gifts* a surprising hit. ★★★★★ (RM)

The Singing Blade (7)—This play could have used the eye of a very distant observer, as what could have been a witty, frolic romp, like, say, *Amadeus*, into the life of castrato Gaetano Guadagni might not have become so self-indulgent. Although well-performed by all four actors, this Timothy J. Anderson play places far too much emphasis on one tragic character who never becomes at all likable, sacrificing much needed depth in the others, especially in Queen Kristina of Sweden. You never really figure out what this ghost of a character is doing there. ★ (CN)

Sir Wilfred Laurier Plays Edmonton (10)—Historically reenacting Prime Minister Laurier's train ride home to Ottawa after officiating Alberta's 1905 inauguration, this eventless play is nothing more than a silver-haired piece of nostalgia. The story reads like a textbook, jumping from chapters on French-English relations to the rivalry between Edmonton and Calgary, without elaborating on some of the most dramatic, interesting aspects of the province's early struggles. As Laurier, Brian Copping has the stately mane and presence to effectively play the Liberal PM. But when he begins one of several dry soliloquies, you'll feel like you have to sit up straight and take notes. ★★ (TK)

S.M.I.L.E. While You D.I.E. (3)—Unfortunately, there are times when you see a one-person tour de force that badly needed other actors on stage. Rachele Fordyce uses video and a multitude of taped bits to bring other voices into her show. As an actress trying to portray a woman working in such a emotionally detached atmosphere as a call centre, the logic of putting so many other parts on tape is understandable, but the amount of technology used on the stage is overwhelming, and the audience soon grows as detached from the performance as the taped voices. ★★ (SSA)

Songs for a New World (E)—Dinner theatre? Welcome to beer theatre, where you can enjoy a tall cool one as you watch. This isn't really a play at all; it's sixteen short story-like songs that each nicely flesh out a character. The acting is great, and the singing is also decent, if a bit uneven at times. The difficulty comes when you try to put the songs all together. They're all hope with a bit of tragedy thrown in, but that's not enough of an overarching theme to carry the day. ★★ (CA)

Soul Mate (13)—Two demons offer a regular Joe the chance to sell his soul for the woman he loves in David Belke's latest Fringe debut. It's a cheesy premise that's matched with even cheesier lines like, "It's better than sliced brimstone." There are a few funny moments amidst the groans and the cast is talented; however, the plot is contrived and predictable, scenes go on for too long, Shakespeare is quoted for no apparent reason, moments of physical comedy are not fully realized, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is referenced, and there are just too damn many jokes about lawyers. ★★ (EL)

Splash20 (5)—This show is a series of skits all involving some element of H2O. Highlights include a very funny scientific lecture about how to drink a glass of water, and a pair of pet fish (with hilarious French accents) commenting on their English owner's upcoming date. There's only a single misstep, but it's an awkward one: a prisoner singing of drowning his new baby. (French humour is weird.) All in all, though, a great show. ★★★★★ (CA)

Spring Ailbl (6)—Voyeurism and self-love bring recent-divorcée/early-morning wanker Marlene (Sue Huff) and ex-rig pig Mac (Andy Northrup) together—which isn't exactly the sort of device you'd feel comfortable with in the next Diane Lane vehicle. But first-time playwright Linda Wood Edwards's script hits all the right cutesy-pie notes, despite story turns that should bring in the vice squad. It's hard not to be won over by the performances—Northrup especially is perfect as the lumbering, well-meaning peeping tom who finds true love in a

woman who loves herself as much as he loves Pil and Trooper. ★★★ (LC)

The Sweet Mysteries of Life (13)—Kate Ryan's musical cabaret is full of songs that are "all about life." In between songs, she talks about her childhood as being a simpler, wonderful time. Ryan is a talented and charismatic singer; her performance of "The Babysitter's Here" actually touched my cynical heart. However, the rest of the songs are kind of cheesy, especially Frank Loesser's "Hamlet" and the "Wrong Note Rag" (yes—it's just as annoying as it sounds). But if you're a fan of Sondheim or you're looking for a nice show to take your grandma to, Ryan's performance is worth seeing. ★★★ (EL)

Tabula Rasa (8)—When Jack Grinhaus emerged through the curtain carrying a bound and hooded Lauren Brotman, who then proceeds to panic and scream while Grinhaus details his rape plans, you could almost hear the audience's eyes rolling in the dark of the theatre. Luckily, *Tabula Rasa* soon veers sharply away from this well-trodden shock territory. Lots of vague dialogue hints as to why this depressed guy and who might be his psychiatrist are in a motel room acting out some kind of mutual rape/suicide pact, but lacking the full disclosure it so desperately need, it's ultimately an intriguing but unsatisfying experience. ★★ (CB)

The Tail of the Peacock (12)—Too many children's entertainers think that the only way to get through to kids is by creating a frenetic ADD environment. Thankfully, there are still a few old fashioned, die-hard entertainers like Annie Dugan, who creates magic with nothing more than stories, a few homemade masks, gloves and a box. With these household items at hand, she takes us on a world tour adventure of a peacock tail. It's an old fashioned storyline, but when you look at the faces of the enchanted children you know that it is more than enough. ★★★★★ (AM)

Tales From Another England (4)—At first, Justin Sage-Passant's tales seem to be about a WASP land of drunken louts, fried breakfasts, and uptight, posh people. But by the latter half, especially, he broadens his scope, embodying a girl on the streets revealing an immigrant's view of not-so-Great Britain, and giving trembling voice to the stiff upper lip. Running the gamut from sad nostalgia for a place-that's-never-really-been to scathing criticisms of the suburbs and packaged countryside of England Inc., this show teases out the nuances of a country that's a lot like ours, only something completely different, too. ★★★★★ (BG)

Tales From The Calabash (12)—Opening with a male voice resounding from behind the scenes and booming through the theatre all the kids instantaneously hushed and sat bolt upright. That is the kind of single-minded attention that Erik de Waal, a storyteller and puppeteer, is able to command in his audience. Throughout the entire show, as he spins exotic tales from his home of South Africa, de Waal invites constant interaction, but miraculously, never lets kids get out of hand. It's a superb performance from a good, old-fashioned master storyteller with the gripping voice of Triton or Zeus. ★★★★★ (AM)

The Taming of the Shrew (4)—The soundtrack of short, snappy punk covers of love songs is your first clue that this MacEwan production is not going to be a boring, college-assigned-reading of Shakespeare. An always lively, well-acted romp through the Bard's gender-battling comedy, this rendition is 70 minutes and features five actors doing the work of a dozen. The comedy is spirited, deft buffoonery, although the more dramatic moments are not so sharply delivered. The play feels a little rushed in parts and the ending not wholly earned, but only a heartless scold could be unmoved by this exuberant entertainment. ★★★★★ (BG)

Tangle (6)—While not a mess, there's still more than a chance you won't be happily caught up in its story, either. In a 7 x 7 x 8.5



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foot cube of aluminum and fabric, Ruth Baines dances, acts and performs aerial tricks to create one woman's knotted headspace. Baines creates some beautiful images in her cocoon—notably the opening shadow dance and her “metamorphosis” aerial sequences—and her dancing, full of clipped, strained movement, creates a powerful sense of tension. Too bad the script doesn't catch up to the lovely spectacle; it tends to detract from Baine's physical theatre strengths. ★★★ (LC)

Target Audience (8)—The local young women of this production deserve accolades for their effort in mounting this difficult black comedy about a bachelorette party gone horribly wrong—but still, *Target Audience* doesn't quite meet its mark. Though the script is fairly smart and succeeds in getting a few laughs, poorly-timed delivery too often lessened the impact of the material, which, sadly, also never sees the characters rise above the level of broad stereotypes. There's an underlying mean streak here that's genuinely funny, but overall, everyone seemed to be a little in over their heads on this one. ★★★ (CB)

Theatresports (13)—There's not much about Theatresports that I can tell you that you probably don't already know—the performers in this series of improv games are funny and quick-witted. Some highlights from the particular performance I saw included Mark Meer as a one hundred year-old Lithuanian heroin user and the enactment of a non-existent Fringe play entitled, “The Boy who Loved Corn.” It's a great time; however, I feel that the question needs to be asked: at a festival that offers 153 different shows, why not check out something that you can't see every Friday night? ★★★ (EL)

The Three B's (12)—This is a story of three school girls who set out to solve the mystery of... well, it's hard to say. The playwright plunges us straight into the thick of the plot and leaves most of the audience wiggling in their seats with bewilderment. Perhaps a mystery is just not well suited to a forty-five minute play where you can't flip the pages back and forth. Thankfully, riveting acting, some great dialogue and amazing direction—one that turns a dull moment into a climax—saves the play. That alone was well worth it. ★★★ (AM)

The Times They Are A-Changin' – A Tribute to Peter, Paul and Mary (D)—In this revue of the trio synonymous with the genre of folk music, the vocal talents of Hank Karas, Dwane Kunitz and Marleigh Rouault, and the guitar of Ron Mire play on '60s nos-

talgia. The venue was decorated with bright construction paper flowers that dangled from the ceiling, and favourites like “If I Had a Hammer” and “Puff the Magic Dragon” were punctuated by a narrative of the group's history and the crunching of free popcorn. All in all, it's a fun show to watch. ★★★ (CN)

Three Dead Trolls in a Baggle (9)—Wes Borg and Joe Bird are very, very funny men. So it is a bit of a sad task to report that this year's entry by the venerable troop is, frankly, not all that good. Most of the blame lies with the show's tech-dependant concept, which doesn't really work. Technical glitches plagued the production, and the



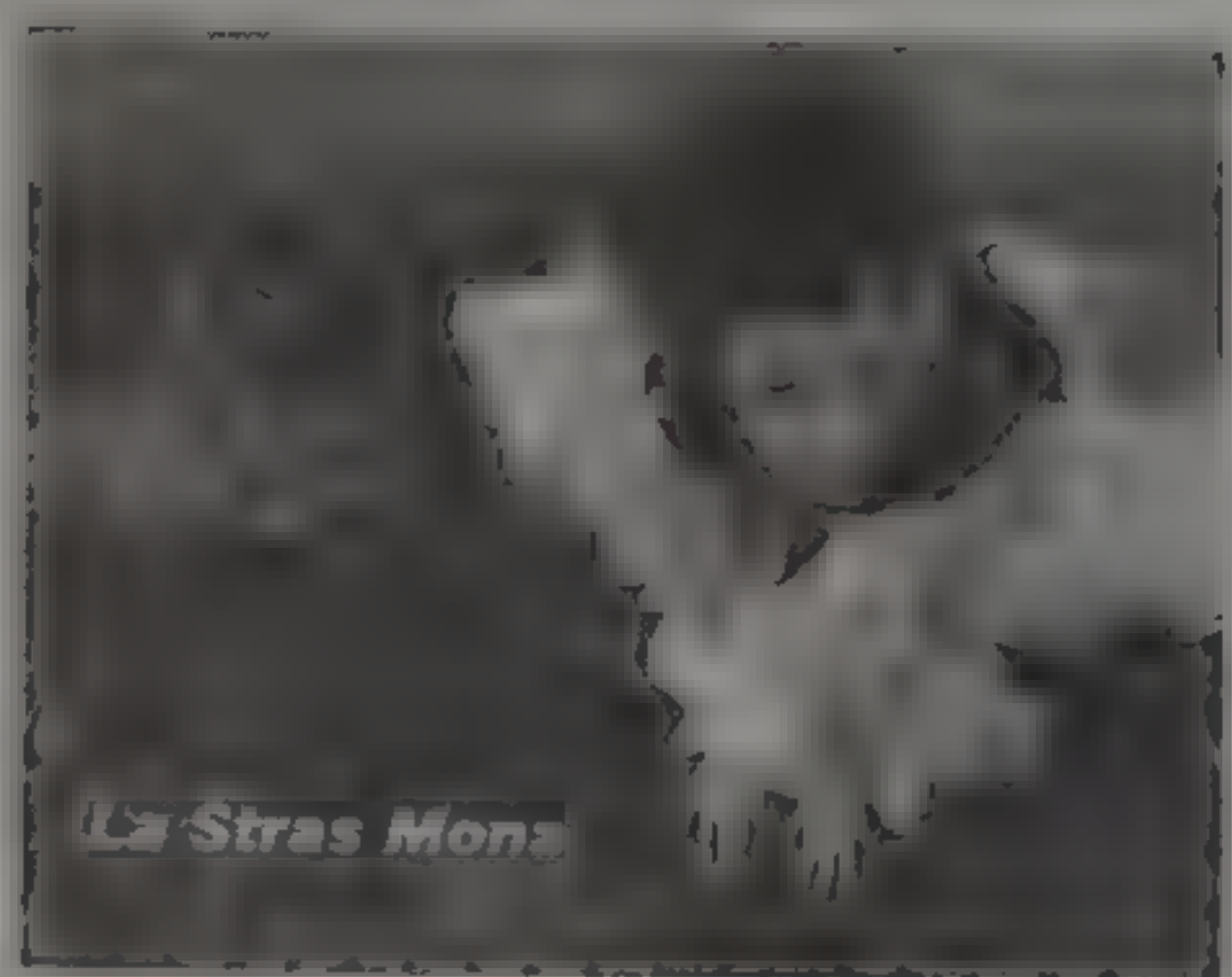
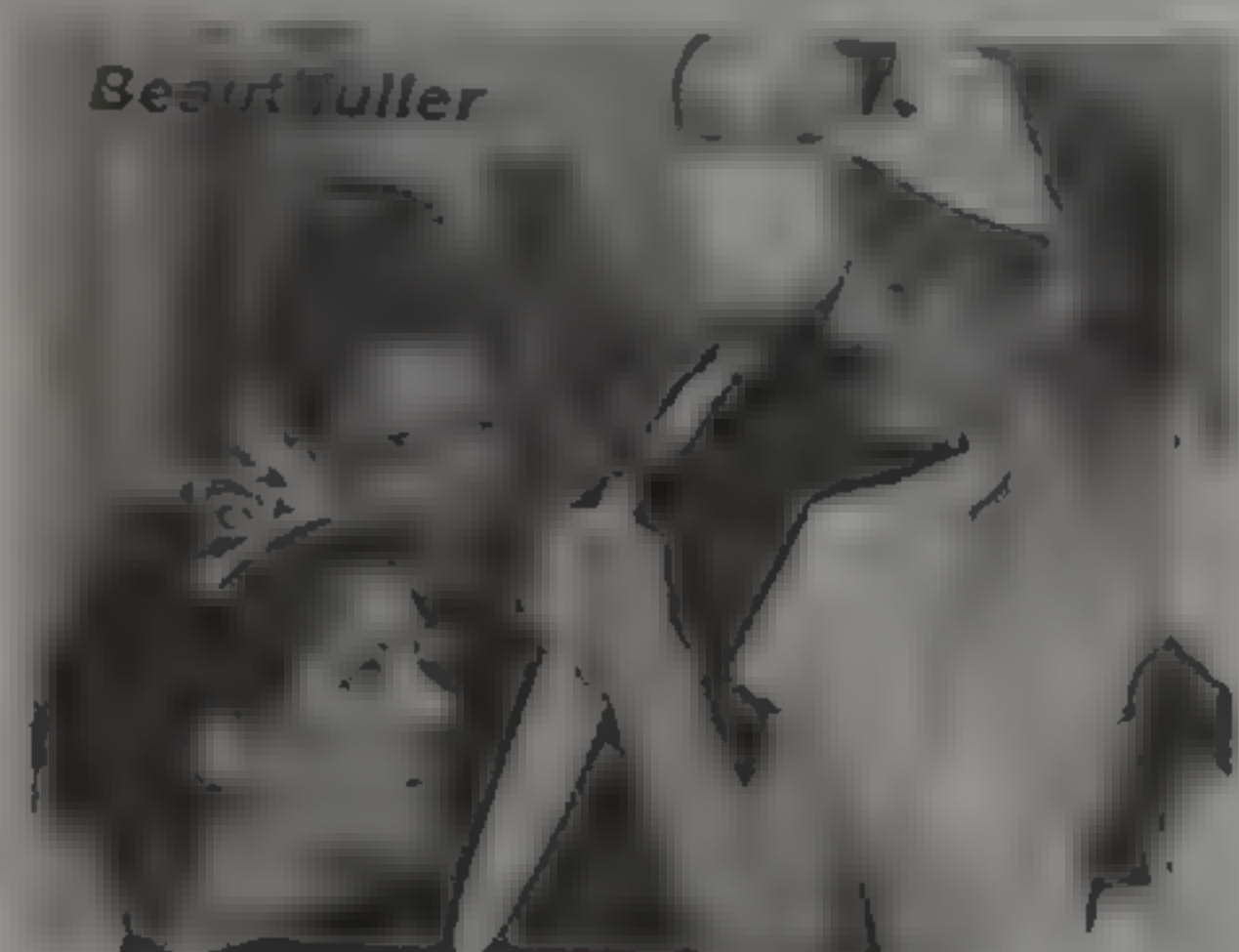
Patti Fedin in...
Lovers Rock!

show's funniest moments came during a complete equipment failure, as Borg and Bird were forced to improvise a couple of tunes, bringing the house down and reminding the audience briefly of their better work at Fringe shows past. ★★★ (RM)

Three Sisters: A Black Opera in Three Acts (5)—Not exactly Chekhovian and not for everyone, this show is, nonetheless, one of the more interesting plays on offer. The story, about three girls who desperately want to escape from small-town Saskatchewan to the cultural capital of, um, Edmonton, is good, and the cast, who caper about the stage with acrobatic enthusiasm, are excellent, especially Jason Carnew as the sisters' cross-dressing Mommy-Daddy, and

Brad Payne as the back-flipping evil banker. The play is a little long and finishes with a sudden quick-fix ending, but the show's sense of fun, and the cast, overcome these minor flaws. ★★★ (CA)

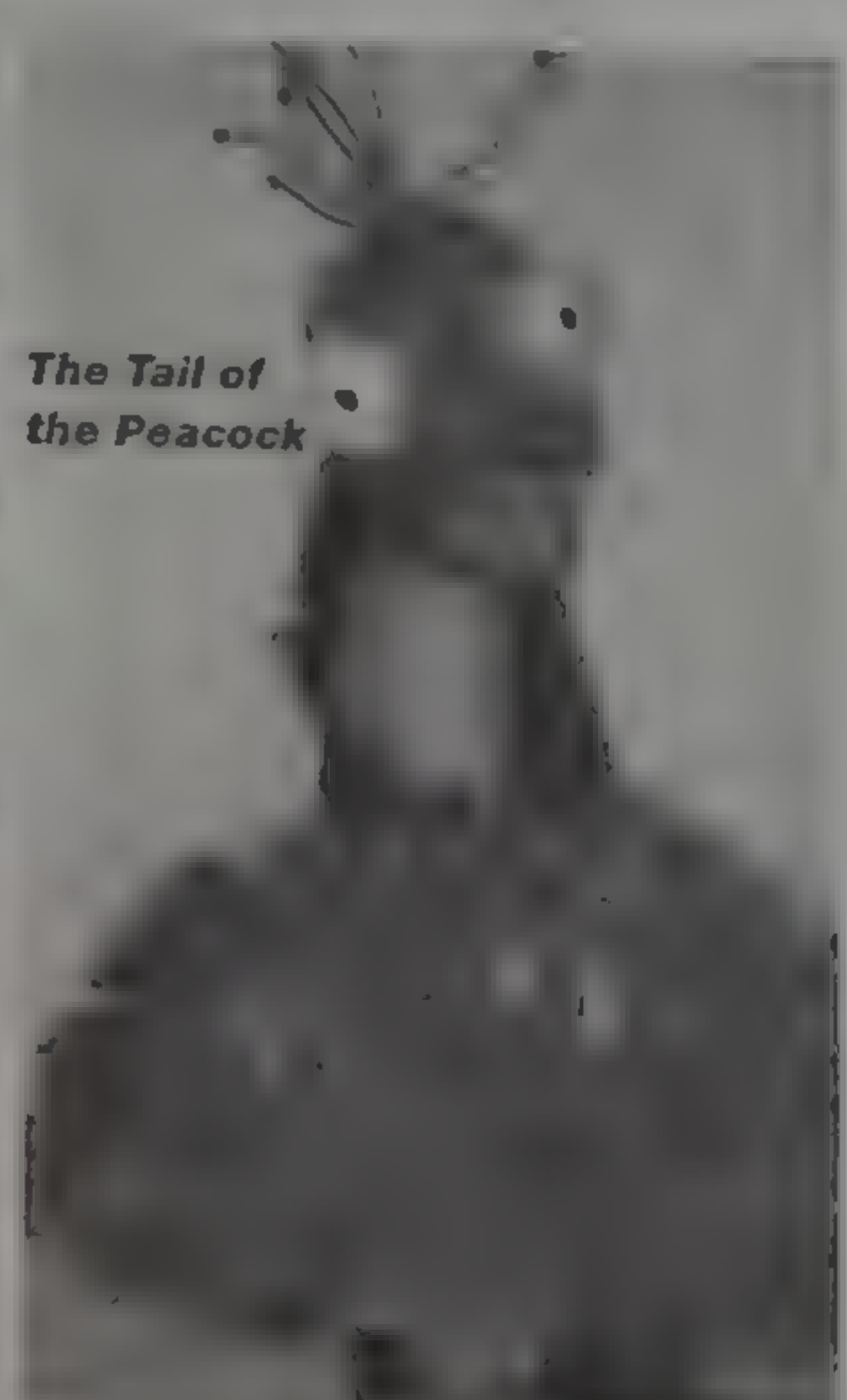
Timmy's Sexual Adventures (8)—If the men's brief-shaped handbill, the larger than life stage prop of tighty whities or simply the title don't spell out that we're dealing with the relationship between a boy and his penis, then I don't know what does. From the innocent beginnings as a child to a young man in his sexual prime, we see Timmy and his man bits learn and grow about each other overtime. The comedic approach to this idea starts off



amusing but, in the end, gets old. You win some and you lose some, this show is a little bit of both. ★★ (JP)

Torched (7)—Beginning with the line “people shouldn't be set on fire,” the audience is quite immediately drawn into the story of Anna, who suffered extensive burns when a science experiment exploded in her face. Most of the story is told through Anna's older sister Claire, a typical angst-ridden and self-absorbed teenager. Terri-Lyn Storey takes on most of the roles easily in this poignant one-hander, but the show still needs some script tightening, as Storey seems to nail it best near the end. Nonetheless, the play is definitely satisfying. ★★★ (CN)

The Typist (3)—There are two types of awful Fringe plays: the ones that are so bad they are comic, which offer some entertainment, and the ones that dull your interest to the point where your mind wanders through the production—what am I going to get to eat on the Fringe grounds? And, can I recall the batting order of the 1979 World Series champion Pittsburgh Pirates? *The Typist* is one of the latter. Alan Reed's script is billed as a romantic comedy, but it's really just a series of awkward moments between two would-be lovers, with no character development and more than a few glaring continuity problems, so you just stop caring about 10 minutes in. ★ (SSA)



Under One Roof (6)—A couple of *Gilmore Girls* they ain't; Mom (Patricia Casey) and Lynn (Rebecca Starr) are the more typical mother-daughter prototype—a pair who bicker endlessly, but of course, really love one another. Casey and Starr come off all too true—Casey particularly, able to even push the audience's buttons, with her cajoling about house rules and husband hunting. But like actual family bickering, it's only so long before it just isn't funny anymore, and the dollops of sentimentality that come to replace the arguments will only placate those with a saccharine tooth. ★★★ (LC)

Urge to Kill (6)—This play may be some sort of self-styled suspense thriller, but the only real mystery is how a play so initially

confusing winds up totally hackneyed and predictable. The confusion is part plotted chaos, part misguided staging: Arlen Konopaki and Tara Brodin juggle myriad characters, thinly distinguished by lighting cues and slightly varying cartoon voices. The pay-off for all the who's-talking-to-who suspense: an unimaginative conspiracy-theory ending and a limp-wristed fight scene heavily featuring plenty of hair pulling and neck breaking, the two easiest moves from your junior high drama class. 6° (LC)

Wake (9)—Musicals at the Fringe are hit and miss at the best of times, but having a cast incapable of carrying a tune is a pretty big handicap to overcome. Unintentionally hilarious accents (the play is set in Ireland, so why does everyone sound like a Newfie?) don't help matters much, and despite a young cast that is endearingly game—but in way over-their-heads—*Wake* cannot save itself from a bad script, uneven acting and uncomfortable musical numbers. ★ (RM)

Welcome to the Party (C)—In this revue of Broadway songs, Jill Pollock and Robbie Townsend display their vocal talents with ease. The songs are interspersed between bits of cheesy banter, making for light and easily digestible Fringe fare. While both sing wonderfully and obviously have fun with the material, there's nothing earth shattering here. ★★★ (CN)

Woyzeck (1)—The multi-talented crew at Theatre Zocalo based the play on some nearly forgotten play by Georg Buchner, and there is a plot about a doomed man and his beautiful wife with a mouth that's swollen and red like a blister, but it's all the macabre action going on outside the script that's really fun. It's a twisted and surreal ride like a short, intense acid trip without all the twitching and loss of brain cells, so it's well worth the journey. ★★★ (PD)

The Zoo Story (4)—This is a straightforward adaptation of Albee's tautly written, surreal play about two strangers meeting in a park. There are some intriguing, dark undertows here—misogyny, repressed homosexuality, class warfare—but the play never quite roars to life. The weight of the dialogue falls on Jerry, a measured, self-conscious, increasingly antagonistic lower-class guy, but his newfound friend/opponent, the bourgeois family man Peter, doesn't provide enough counter balance. This version partly strips away the veneer of civilized man and, in Jerry's words, offer the “beginning of an understanding,” but it never metamorphoses Albee's absurdity into genuine pathos or profundity. ★★★ (BC)

ARTS WEEKLY

Fax your free listings to 426-2889
or e-mail Glenys at
listings@vuwweekly.com
Deadline is Friday at 3pm

GALLERIES/MUSEUMS

AGNES BUGERA GALLERY 12310 Jasper Ave (482-2854) • *FIRE GARDENS*: Floral paintings by Jane Adams and Jamie Evard • Sept. 3-16

ALBERTA CRAFT COUNCIL GALLERY 10186-106 St (488-6611) • Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm (closed all hols) • **Main Gallery**: • *HISTORY IN THE MAKING*: until Aug. 31 • **Discovery Gallery**: *FINE LEGS, GREAT CHESTS, HOT SEATS*: Works by NAITs advanced woodworking and design graduates; until Aug. 27 • *RETROSPECTIVE*: Quilts by Betty Loudon; until Aug. 27

ART BEAT GALLERY 26 St. Anne Street St. Albert (459-3679) • Open Tue, Wed, Fri 10am-6pm; Thu 10am-8pm; Sat 10am-5pm • Min Ma and Bi Yan Cheng acrylic paintings • Through Aug. 31

ART MODE GALLERY 12220-Jasper Ave. (453-1555) • Open Tue-Sun • Glass works

by Ion Tamaian • Aug. 27-28

BEARCLAW GALLERY 10403-124 St (482-1204) • Artworks by Norval Morrisseau, Daphne Odjig, Roy Thomas, Jane Ash Poitras, George Littlechild, Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Jim Logan, Maxine Noel, Aaron Paquette and others

CENTRE D'ARTS VISUELS DE L'ALBERTA 9103-95 Ave. (461-3427) • *ART CORNUCOPIA*: Artworks by Marie-Florence, Damien Manchuck Rivard, Rowan Scott, Suzan Woolgar, and Clint Cuehler • Until Sept. 7

CHRISTL BERGSTROM'S RED GALLERY 9621-82 Ave (439-8210) • Open Mon-Fri 11am-5pm • 2005 *SUMMER DRAWING SHOW*: Drawings by Christl Bergstrom • Until Sept. 1

DEVONIAN BOTANIC GARDEN (422-7150/987-3054) • *KURIMOTO NIGHT*: Photographs by Chantal Thorlakson • Sept. 2-4 (11am-5pm)

DINING ROOM GALLERY 5411-51 St, Stony Plain (963-2777) • Open Mon-Sat 10am-4pm; Sun 10am-6:30pm • *ALBERTA LANDSCAPES*: A tribute to Alberta's Centennial by Shirly Stewart • Until Sept. 8

EDMONTON ART GALLERY 2 Sir Winston Churchill Sq (422-6223) • Open Tue-Wed and Fri 10:30am-5pm; Thu 10:30am-8pm; Sat, Sun 11am-5pm. Closed Mon • *5TH ALBERTA BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART*: Until Sept. 4 • *THE ROAD: CONSTRUCTING THE ALASKA HIGHWAY*: until Oct. 2 • *NATURAL PHILOSOPHY*: Aug. 27-Jan. 8 • **Children's Gallery**: *TIR-NA-NOG (FOREVER YOUNG)*: By Spider Yardley-Jones • \$9 (adult)/\$6 (student/senior)/\$3 (child 6-12)/free (member/child 5 and under)

ELECTRUM DESIGN STUDIO 12419 Stony Plain Rd (482-1402) • Open Tue by appt. only; Wed-Fri 10am-5:30pm; Sat 10am-4pm, closed long weekends • *COLLECTION 2005*: Rotating show of artists works

EXTENSION CENTRE GALLERY 2nd Fl, University Extension Centre, 8303-112 St (492-0166) • Open: Mon-Fri 8am-4pm • *NAKED VS. NUDE* • Aug. 29-Sept. 21

FORT DOOR 10308-81 Ave (432-7535) • Open Mon-Wed, Sat 10am-6pm, Thu-Fri 10am-9pm; Sun 12-5pm • Eskimo soapstone carvings, Inuk by C. Inukpuk, Eskimo and Indian silver and gold jewellery by J. McDougall

FRINGE GALLERY 10516 Whyte Ave (432-0240) • Highlights from Artwalk; until Aug. 30 • Ian Forbes; through September

HARCOURT HOUSE 10215-112 St (426-4180) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 12-4pm • *N.A.F.T.A? (NOT A FAIR TRADE FOR ALL)*: Photo/text installation by Fred Lonidier, representing work, life, and labour struggles by Mexico's maquiladora workers • **Front Room: IN ONE'S OWN TIME**: Photographs and posters by Lee Anne Pellerin • Aug. 25-Sept. 24 • Reception: Sept. 15 (7-10pm)

JOHNSON GALLERY 7711-85 St (465-6171) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm; Sat 10am-5pm • Artworks by Dave Ripley, Kerry Milligan, Kathy Henderson, Myrle Steen, Kenneth Gordon, Linda Nelson, Myrna Wilkinson, agate paintings and pendants by Joyce Boyer, pottery by Helena Ball • Through August

JEFF ALLEN ART GALLERY 10831 University Ave (433-5807) • Artworks and crafts by the instructors of the Strathcona Place Centre • Until Sept. 22

JOHNSON GALLERY 11817-80 St (479-8424) • Open Tue-Fri 9:30am-5:30pm; Sat 9:30am-4pm • Prints by Myles MacDonald, Yardley Jones, artworks by Wendy Risdale, enamel works by Enore Forestal, pottery by Noburo Kubo • Through August

LATITUDE 53 10248-196 St, 2nd Fl (423-5353) • Posters by Seripop • Aug. 30-Sept. 2 (10am-6pm)

LITTLE CHURCH GALLERY OF SPRUCE GROVE 455 King Street, Spruce Grove • *HIGHLIGHTS*: A vibrant show of colour by Marilyn St. Germaine • Until Aug. 27

MANDOLIN BOOKS 6419-112 Ave (479-4050) • Paintings by Andrea Donini • Through September • Reception: Sun, Sept. 11 (2-4pm)

MCMULLEN GALLERY U of A Hospital, 8440-112 St (407-7152) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-8pm; Sat-Sun 1-8pm • *NOT JUST CHICKENS*: Artworks depicting Alberta's diverse landscapes • Until Sept. 11

MCPAG 5411-51 St, Stony Plain (963-2777) • Open Mon-Sat 10am-4pm; Sun 10am-6:30pm • *URBAN LANDSCAPES*: Paintings by Cesar Alvarez; until Aug. 31 • *THE LIFE IN YELLOW AND BLUE*: Artifacts and photographs the Canadian Ski Patrol System (C.S.P.S.); until Aug. 31 • *EARTH FIRE WIND AND WATER*: Installation by Sheri Chaba; Sept. 3-Oct. 1; opening reception: Sun, Sept. 11 (1-3:30pm)

MUTTART CONSERVATORY 9610-96 St • Open weekdays 9am-5:30pm; weekends/hols 11am-5:30pm • *CULTIVATED CHAOS*: Natural and man-made art • Until Aug. 26

NINA HAGGERTY CENTER FOR THE

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ARTS WEEKLY

Continued from previous page

ARTS Stollery Gallery, 9702-111 Ave (474-7611) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-2:30pm • **L'ELECTICAL:** New artworks by artists from the Nina Haggerty Studio Collective; until Aug. 26 • **TRANSUBSTANTIATIONS—IN MEMORY OF DAVID HUGGETT:** Multi-media artworks, celebrating the life of poet and artist David Huggett; Sept. 2-Oct. 14; opening reception and readings: Thu, Sept. 15 (4-8 pm)

PICTURE THIS 959 Ordze Rd, Sherwood Park (467-3038) • Metal sculptures by Rogelio Menz, landscapes by Audrey Pfannmuller, Dean McLeod and florals by Karoll Dalyce Brinton • Through September

PROFILES PUBLIC ART GALLERY 19 Perron Street, St. Albert (460-4310) • **DRESS CODE:** Artworks by Elizabeth Clark • Tue-Sat (10am-5pm), Thu (10am-8pm) • Through Sept. 3

PROPAGANDA 10808-124 St • Mon 9am-5pm; Tue-Fri 9am-8pm; Sat 9am-4pm • **A FAMILY STORY:** Paintings by Saskia Aarts • Until Aug. 30

PYGMALIAN SCHOOL OF FINE ART 12, 44 St. Thomas Street, St. Albert (460-1677) • **THE DIRECTOR'S CUT—A TRIBUTE TO VAN GOGH:** Dixie R. Orriss shows her latest works • Until Sept. 4

REYNOLDS-ALBERTA MUSEUM Wetaskiwin (1-800-661-4726) • **LIFE AND TIMES OF THE MOTORCYCLE** • Until Sept. 17, 2006

ROWLES GALLERY Mezz Level, 10130-103 St. (426-4035) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm; Sat 12-5pm • Watercolours, oils, acrylics, sculptures in bronze, soapstone and metal, glass works and ceramics by Western Canadian artists • Alternate spaces: **WESTIN HOTEL:** acrylics by Kathryn Sherman • **SCOTIA PLACE:** watercolours and acrylics by Frances Alty-Arscott • **SUN LIFE PLACE:** oils by George Schwindt and acrylics by Bi Y Cheng • All

shows ongoing

THE ROYAL ALBERTA MUSEUM 12845-102 Ave (453-9100) • Open Mon-Sun 9am-5pm • **FROM HOOF PRINTS TO TANK TRACKS:** The South Alberta Light Horse Regiment's role during the first and second World Wars; until Sept. 18 • **TERRACE:** **ALBERTA CENTENNIAL SCULPTURE EXHIBITION:** Sculptures by Andrew French, Ryan McCourt, Rob Wilms; until Sept. 25 • **ALBERTA COMMUNITIES: THEN AND NOW:** until Nov. 13

SADDLERY GALLERY 10137-104 St (423-4484) • Open: Tue-Sat 10am-7pm • **REMIXED:** Group show • Until Sept. 6

SCOTT GALLERY 10411-124 St (488-3619) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm • Summer works show of gallery artists such as Douglas Haynes, Cynthia Gardiner, Noni Boyle, Tom Willock and more • Until Aug. 31

SNAP GALLERY 10309-97 St (423-1492) • Open Tue-Sat 12-5pm • **BOMBSHELL:** Artworks by Jennifer Yorke • Until Sept. 3

THE STUDIO GALLERY 143 Grandin Park Plaza St. Albert (460-5990) • Tue-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 10am-4pm • **WIDE OPEN SPACES: RURAL LANDSCAPES:** Landscapes painted by Bruce Thompson • Until Aug. 26

URBAN ROOTS GALLERY 10143 Whyte Ave, 2nd Fl (438-7978) • Sculpture by Ritchie Velthuis, drawings by Burke and photography by Orianna • Until Sept. 30

VAAA GALLERY 3rd Fl, Harcourt House, 10215-112 St (421-1731) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5:30pm • **ASPECTS:** Artworks by Shelley Rothenberger, Ruby J. Mah • Aug. 25-Sept. 24 • Opening reception: Thu, Aug. 25 (7-9:30pm)

VANDERLEELIE GALLERY 10183-112 St. (452-0286) • **RENEWAL:** Abstract paintings by Phil Darrah • Until Sept. 7

WORKS GALLERY Commerce Place, 10155-102 St (426-2122) • **THROUGH ALBERTA EYES:** Photographs by Orest Semchishen, curated by Gordon Snyder • Until Sept. 16

LITERARY

NAKED CYBER CAFÉ 10354 Jasper Ave • Music, poetry, and performance art open stage hosted by the Naked Eclectic Electric Orchestra • Every Thu (8pm)

LIVE COMEDY

BLUE CHICAGO 14203 Stony Plain Rd (451-1402) • Comedy open mic hosted by Kathleen McGee • Every Mon (9pm) • Free

THE COMEDY FACTORY 3414 Gateway Boulevard (469-4999) • Thu 8:30pm, Fri (8:30pm), Sat (8pm and 10:30pm) • Marty Hanenberg; Aug. 25-27 • Cory Harding; Sept. 1-3

THE COMIC STRIP 1646 Bourbon St, WEM, 8882-170 St (483-5999) • Show times nightly at 8pm; weekends 8pm and 10:30pm • Frances Dilozenzo; Aug. 25-28 • Get Hypnotized: with Sheldon Fingler; Tue, Aug. 30 • Best of Improv: improv teams with the Fresh Faces of stand-up; Wed, Aug. 31 • Kivi Rogers with Rob Pue and Paul Brown; Sept. 1-4

WUNDERBAR HOFBRAUHAUS 8120 101 St (436-2286) • The Lederhoosers Super Comedy Dryhump • Every Fri (8:30pm) • Free

YUK YUK'S KOMEDY KABARET Londonderry Mall (481-9857) • Thu-Fri (8pm) Sat (8pm and 10:30pm) • Pro-Am Comedy Jam every Thu • Joey Elias, Phil Schchat, Billy Cowen, Kelly Dixon; Aug. 25-27

THEATRE

A CLOSER WALK WITH PATSY CLINE Mayfield Dinner Theatre, Mayfield Inn, 16615-109 Ave (483-4051) • A musical biography of Patsy Cline from her days as a teenage singer to her appearances at the Grand Ole Opry • Until Sept. 5

THE PIRATES OF THE NORTH SASKATCHEWAN Jubilations Dinner Theatre, 8882-170 St, WEM (484-2424) • Until Oct. 23

EVENTS WEEKLY

Fax your free listings to 426-2889 or e-mail Glenys at listings@vueweekly.com Deadline is Friday at 3pm

CLUBS/LECTURES

ABUSE OF ALBERTAN WORKERS 15505 Yellowhead Trail (439-8235) • The Industrial Workers of the World rally at CLAC offices • Aug. 26 (5-7pm)

ART, CRAFT AND WELLNESS ADVANCEMENT ASSOCIATION (ACWAA) Galleria of Crafters and Artisans, 1082 Capilano Shopping Centre • Silent auction, bid until 5:30pm • Aug. 27

BOREAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM 7, 6328A-104 St; every Thu (6:30-8:30) • Organic Roots, 8225-122 St • Every third Thu (6:30pm)

LAUGH WITH ME (457-5601) everyonelaughwithme@yahoo.ca • Montreal's Laughter Lady is now here to offer her chuckles to Edmontonians. Learn how to stress a little less, reduce anxiety, decrease insomnia, lighten that heavy humdrum feeling and meet new faces using Tamra's R.E.D. program • Until Sept. 4

LIVING POSITIVE www.edmlivingpositive.ca (1-877-975-9448/488-5768) • Edmonton Persons Living with HIV Society • Every Tue (7pm): Peer-facilitated support groups • Daily drop-in, peer counseling

MEDITATION • Gameau United Place, 11148-84 Ave (412-1006) Drop-in meditation with with Gen Kelsang Phuntsog; every Thu (7-9pm); \$10 (donation) • Diamond Way Buddhist Centre, 4th Fl, 10314 Whyte Ave (455-5488) free meditations every Wed (8pm) • City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave; The Way of Life meditation; last Tue each month (7pm door) •

Transmission Meditation, Stillpoint Healing Centre, 10350-124 St (433-3342) every Tue, Thu, Sun (8-9:30pm); free • Emily Murphy Park, East side; every Sun (11:30am) until Sept 8

TOASTMASTERS St. Paul's Church, 4005 115 Ave (476-6963) • Learn public speaking; every Thu (7-9pm) • Baker Centre, 10th Fl, 10025-106 St (477-2613) Upward Bound Toastmasters; every Wed (7pm) • University of Alberta, Business 1-23 (492-0910) Business and Beyond Toastmasters Club, practice and enhance your skills; every Monday (6:30 pm)

WASKAHEGAN TRAIL ASSOCIATION Southgate Mall, 111 St, Whitemud Dr (435-1197) • Free guided hike, 11km at Whitemud Adventure Trail • Aug. 28 (9pm)

QUEER LISTINGS

AGAPE Faculty of Education, U of A Campus • Sex, sexual, gender difference in education and culture focus group • Contact Dr. Andre Grace (andre.grace@ualberta.ca) for info

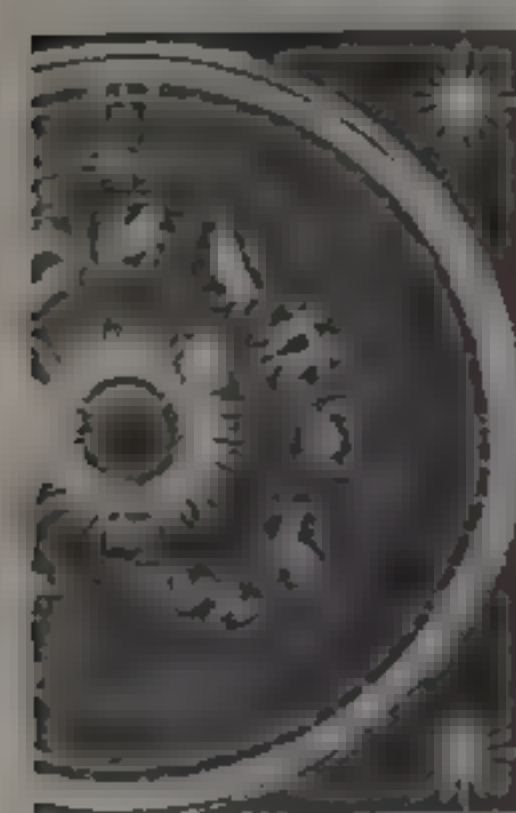
AXIOS (454-8449) • A support group, local chapter of the international organization of Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholic Gay and Lesbian Christians

BISEXUAL WOMEN'S COFFEE GROUP bwcoffeegroup@yahoo.ca • Social group for bi-curious and bisexual women • Second Wed. each month (7:30pm)

BOOTS AND SADDLES 10242-106 St (423-5014) • Large tavern with pool tables, restaurant, shows. Members only

BUDDY'S NITE CLUB 11725 Jasper Ave (488-6636) • Open daily 9-3, Fri 8pm •

SEE NEXT PAGE



free
will
astrology

BY ROB BREZSNY



Minnesota radio station KNUJ came up with a unique proposal for how the governor and top legislators could deal with their intractable conflict: They would have a wrestling match in a large vat filled with sauerkraut. I think you should adopt this idea for your own use, Aries—though I suggest that maybe you and your adversary conduct your grapple in a sweeter-smelling substance than fermented cabbage. How about jello or pudding, for instance? One way or another, find a constructive way to resolve disagreements or hostilities by using a half-playful, half-serious approach.



Surveys show that many parents in England cut away the crusts before serving bread to their children. Responding to this need, a baking company has begun marketing bread without crusts. I mention this, Taurus, because pre-made crustless bread is a good metaphor for the experiences you'll soon be offered in abundance: soft, spongy sweetness that you can freely access without having to break through any hard outer layers. I won't be surprised if you get tired of it after

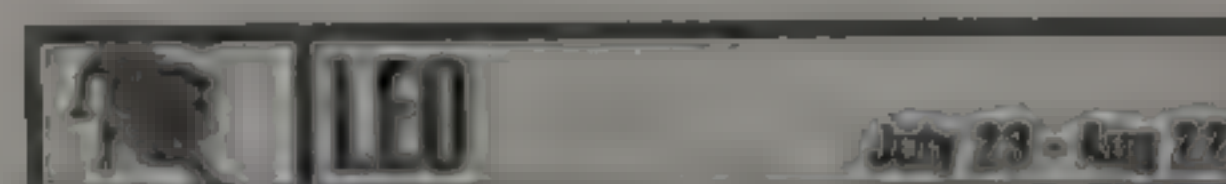
a while, though, and start seeking out adventures with more crunch. But in the short run you might find it very relaxing.



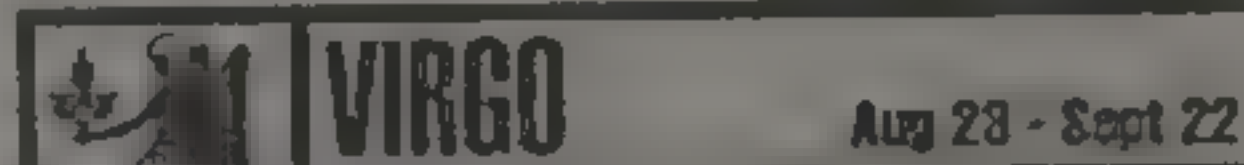
"If you dig a hole deep enough into the earth," the grandmother of my friend Carlos used to tell him when he was a kid, "you can see the sun rise at night." From a metaphorical perspective, that's good advice for you right now, Gemini. In order to get to the highest place possible, you might have to dive down deeper than you ever have before. To find the illumination you need, you should probably explore the densest darkness.



In his horoscope column in *The Onion*, retired machinist Lloyd Shumner told those of us born under the sign of Cancer, "You lack initiative, which means that you usually wait until someone yells 'Get funky!' before you get funky." The coming week will be the perfect time for us to prove him wrong, my fellow Crabs. Our initiative will be overflowing, especially in regards to tasks that involve getting funky.



According to the legends of many cultures, every one of us has a doppelganger somewhere on the planet: a person who looks exactly like us. The modern sciences of genetics and statistics go further, saying that there are at least 80 people worldwide who are our spitting image. If you're ever going to meet one of these doubles, Leo, it will probably be in the coming weeks. But even if you don't, I predict that the whole world will become a giant mirror, reflecting back to you visions of yourself that you haven't been able to see before.



Who did you start out to be, Virgo? It's time to remember that. I urge you to muse about the ways you could benefit from renewing a connection to your origins. Revisit your earliest sources of truth. Think about whether you're still on track to become the person you knew you could be when your vision was still fresh and innocent. Here's a good way to anchor your explorations in concrete reality: Meditate on the scientifically verified fact that with each breath, you re-inhale at least one molecule you first took in during the minutes after you were born.



Physicist Jonathan Huebner says scientists are running out of bright ideas. "We are approaching the point when the rate of innovation is the same as it was during the Dark Ages," he wrote in *New Scientist* magazine. That argument seems wrong to me. Everyone I know is awash in the changes unleashed by new technology. But just in case his theory has any merit, I call on Libran inventors to begin reversing the trend. After all, you're now at the height of your ability to generate constructive novelty. So are all the rest of you Librans, for that matter. Get out there and unleash a flurry of good changes.



Located north of the Arctic Circle, the Northwest Passage is a body of water that joins the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Large parts of it are frozen over most of the year, though, so it's not a practical way for ships to travel. The U.S. regards the Northwest Passage as international territory, but Canada recently claimed it as its own sovereign territory. Canadian Defense Minister Bill Gra-

ham foresees a time when global warming will have melted so much ice that it will become a viable sea route of great value to his country. Be like Graham this week, Scorpio. Peer into the future and scan for potential resources that are as yet unrecognized or unready. Make them yours now, while they're still cheap and available.



I live six miles from one of the world's most notorious penitentiaries, San Quentin. Both Charlie Manson and Sirhan Sirhan have spent time there, and a recent riot injured 42 inmates. Though I've never had a major itch to visit the place, I felt differently after hearing about a gift store within the prison walls. I corralled a friend and the two of us made an impulsive field trip there. As we grazed amidst the prisoners' handiwork, including birdhouses fashioned out of cigar boxes, paintings of clowns on velvet, and banjos made from bedpans, I had a psychic epiphany. I realized that my situation was similar to your imminent future: You, too, will find weird little treasures while just visiting a place where other people are trapped.



Let's discuss the differences between dumb, unproductive pain and smart, useful pain. The former is the kind you keep being drawn back to out of habit. It's familiar, and therefore perversely comfortable. The latter is the kind of pain that surprises you with valuable teachings and inspires you to see the world with new eyes. While stupid pain is often born of fear, wise pain is stirred up by love. The dumb, unproductive stuff comes from allowing yourself to be controlled by your early conditioning and from doing things that are out of harmony with your essence. The smart, useful variety arises out of a willingness to live

passionately and with a sense of adventure. Can you guess which type I'm urging you to gravitate toward right now, Capricorn?



To promote my new book, *Pranoia Is the Antidote for Paranoia*, I've tried to set up lectures at bookstores. One place I contacted was A Clean Well-Lit Place for Books in San Francisco. It turned me down. Ironically, I was later able to score a gig at a spot called A Dirty Poorly-Lit Place for Books. It's a seedy dive in a rundown neighborhood. My audience was a handful of rowdies instead of the well-heeled crowd that might have seen me at the other store, and I sold just one book. But I enjoyed my time thoroughly, as my uninhibited congregation joined me in my favorite rituals, like kicking our own asses, burning money, throwing imaginary stones at heaven, and dancing in slow-motion on tabletops. Would audience members at A Clean Well-Lit Place for Books have done that? I think not. The moral of the story, Aquarius: It'll be very lucky if you, like me, have to settle for your second choice in the coming week.



You don't need to know how your computer and car work in order to use them. Their inner workings may be unfathomable, but that doesn't matter as long as you benefit from what they do for you. Let's apply that same principle to a certain relationship that's perplexing you. You obviously get something out of your alliance with this person, since you've chosen not to leave it. Yet you seem bothered by the fact that you can't figure out what you are to each other and where you're supposed to go next. My advice? For now stop trying to understand it. Just surrender to the fruitful mystery. Simply let your connection perform its enigmatic magic. ☺

Continued from previous page

Mon: Amateur strip (12:30); DJ Alvaro, Ashley Love • **Tue:** retro, top 40 with DJ Arrowchaser, malebox night, free pool • **Wed:** DJ Eddy Toonflash; Drag shows (12:30) • **Thu:** Wet undies contest (12:30) w/ Connie Lingua and DJ Squiggles • **Fri:** Dance party with DJ Alvaro • **Sat:** DJ Arrowchaser, pool tournament • **Sexy Sundays** with DJ Eddy Toonflash, all request dance party

DOWN UNDER 12224 Jasper Ave (482-7960) • Steam bath

EDMONTON RAINBOW BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (422-6207) • An organization for gay men and lesbians in business and their non-gay friends to share business knowledge, learn, make friends and network in a positive, proud space where being yourself is the norm

HIV NETWORK OF EDMONTON SOCIETY 300, 11456-Jasper Ave (488-5742) or contact7@hivedmonton.com • Programs and support services for people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS and related illnesses. Counselling, referrals, support groups, harm reduction, education, advocacy and public awareness campaigns

INSIDE/OUT U of A Campus • Campus-based organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified and queer (LGBTQ) faculty, graduate student, academic, straight allies and support staff • Third Thu each month (fall/winter terms): Speakers Series. Contact Kris (kwells@ualberta.ca) or Marjorie (mwonham@ualberta.ca) for schedule

MADELEINE SANAM FOUNDATION Faculté St. Jean, 8406 Marie-Anne Gaboury (91 St) Rm 3-18 (490-7332) • Program for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and harm reduction in French, English and other African languages • Every 3rd and 4th Sat (9am-5pm) • Free (member)/\$10 (membership) • Pre-register

MAKING WAVES SWIMMING CLUB www.geocities.com/makingwaves_edm • Recreational and competitive swimming with coaching, beginners encouraged to participate. Socializing after practices • Every Tue and Thu

MEN TALKING WITH PRIDE Pride Centre, 10010-109 St (488-3234) • Every Sun (7pm): A safe, supportive, confidential discussion group talking about all gay related issues, for men at any stage of coming out • Free • talkingwithpride@hotmail.com

PFLAG Pride Centre, 10010-109 St (462-5958) • Meetings every third Tuesday of

the month at 7:30pm • Support/education for parents, families and friends of lesbians/gays/bisexuals/transgenders

PRISM BAR AND GRILL 10524-101 St, back entrance (990-0038) • Lesbian and gay bar/restaurant

THE ROOST 10345-104 St (426-3150) • Open Sun-Thu 8pm-3am, Fri-Sat 8pm-4am • **Wed:** Amateur strip with Weena Luv, Sticky Vicky, DJ Alvaro • **Thu:** Rotating shows: Sticky's open stage and the Weakest Link game second and last Thursday with DJ Jazzy • **Fri:** Upstairs: Euro Blitz: New European music with DJ Ottawak Downstairs: DJ Jazzy • **Sat:** Every Sat like new years: Upstairs: Monthly theme parties with DJ Jazzy Downstairs: New music with DJ Dan and Mike • Long weekend Sundays: Betty Ford Hangover Clinic Show: Every long weekend with DJ Jazzy • **Tue-Thu \$1 (member)/\$4 (non-member); Fri-Sat \$4 (member)/\$6 (non-member); Sun \$2**

STEAMWORKS 11745 Jasper Ave (451-5554) • Steam baths open daily (24hrs)

WOODYS 11723 Jasper Ave (488-6557) • Open Daily (noon) • **Sat-Wed:** Karaoke with Annie and Tizzy (7-12pm) • **Tue, Sat-Sun:** Pool tournaments

YOUTH UNDERSTANDING YOUTH Pride Centre 10010-109 St, www.mem-

bers.shaw.ca/yuy • Every Sat (7-9pm) • An adult facilitated social/support group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and straight youth under the age of 25

SPECIAL EVENTS

ACTIVE ARTS WALKING TOUR CBC studios at Edmonton Centre (422-6223) • Travel from City Hall to the Winspear Centre, then into Maclab Theatre in the Citadel and check out some great art and history along the way • Aug. 25 (12:05 and 12:30pm)

ALBERTA SEPARATION RALLY Alberta Legislature Grounds (486-1967) • 4 Speakers talk on government corruption, gun registry, Kyoto, and Alberta Separation Party • Aug. 27 (2-3:30pm)

BIKE WITH JACK LAYTON Picnic Site 2 in Laurier Park (474-2415) • **Sat, Aug. 27** (1pm ride; 6pm barbeque) • **Ride:** \$100, barbeque: \$30/\$15 (low-income)

FRINGE THEATRE FESTIVAL Various venues throughout Old Strathcona, www.fringe.alberta.com/fta (448-9000) • Until Aug. 28

JUVENILE DIABETES RESEARCH FOUNDATION GOLF TOURNAMENT Leduc Golf and Country Club (428-

0343) • Continental breakfast followed by 18 holes of golf, great prizes and dinner • Aug. 26 (8am)

THE LANDING PAD OPEN HOUSE #201, 10923 101 St (424-1573) • Join Mile Zero Dance as they celebrate the grand opening of their new studio • Sept. 10 (1-4pm)

NFB FILM CLUB Stanley Milner Library Theatre, Sir Winston Churchill Sq (496-7070) • *Music For a Blue Train*, 14A, coarse language • **Sun, Aug. 28** (2pm) • Free

STORYTELLING FESTIVAL Reed's Bazaar, 1905 St, Fort Edmonton Park (797-3949/481-4381/987-2503) • Presented by T.A.L.E.S. featuring workshops (10:30am-noon), and festival activities (1pm-5pm); Sept. 3-4 • Storytelling concert upstairs in the Egge's Barn, featuring Andrea Spalding; Sept. 3 (8pm); \$10 (door)/\$8 (adv)

SYNAPSE: THE SPARK THAT CONNECTS Remedy Café, 8631-109 St (420-0505) • Readings by Alice Major, iHuman youth, Dawn Carter, and Kirsten Sikora • **Aug. 27** (9pm) • Free, donations to iHuman Society

YOGA WELLNESS DAY (421-9444) • Shanti yoga open house, free classes, food and music • **Aug. 27** (12:30-5:30pm), drumming circle (6pm)

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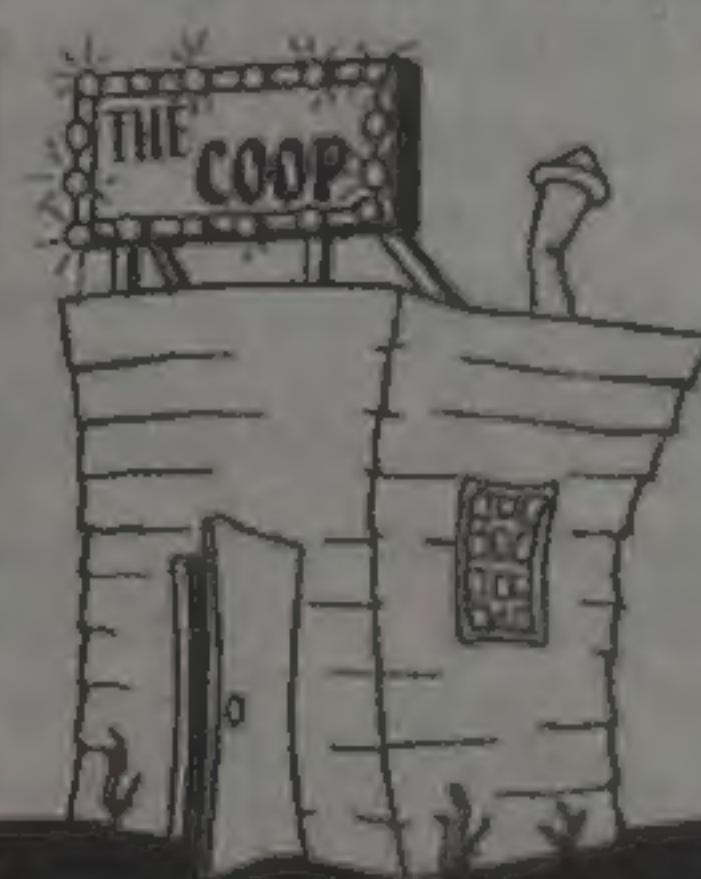
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alt sex column

By ANDREA NEMERSON

I can't believe it's not semen!

Dear Andrea:

I was wondering if there is any such thing as a strap-on which "ejaculates" through some sort of tube running through it. If so, what is the semen substitute?

Love, Strapped On

Dear Strap:

The things I do for you people!

There is indeed such a device on the market. The one I found is called "The Orgasmatron" (which conjures up unsavoury images of dildo purveyors having to write Woody Allen a check for every pulsating pink penis sold) and the instructions say to use warm water. This expulsion, presumably, is meant to take place internally, as mere water would produce an unsatisfactory visual. Classic semen substitutes include Jergens Lotion, reconstituted potato "buds" (seen in action in a documentary on gay porn), and various concoctions involving egg white. I leave the experimentation up to you, along with any cleanup problems which might result from flouting the manufacturer's directions. Off you go.

Love, Andrea

Puppet poo!

Dear Andrea:

My sex life with my fiancée has waned under the pressures of our upcoming wedding. The closer it gets the less frequently we have sex. Initially, it was awesome. We had that sweaty, howling monkey sex almost daily.

We recently watched the Team America unrated version, which has puppet sex scenes. I never thought puppets fucking would turn me on, but after fucking they piss and shit on each other as a ritual of dominance and submission that transcends time. I am now fixated on pissing and shitting on my fiancée. It's really the only thing turning me on about us now. I thought it might rekindle our sex life. She finds no attraction to the act, or willingness to submit to my whims. I volunteered to have her "do" me first and that was declined.

Should I stop hinting to her and do handstands in the shower and "do" myself?

Love, Mr. Poo

Dear Poo:

I really do mean to get around to addressing your problem, but I'm still a little stunned to hear that there is stop-motion scat in the unrated version of Team America. I saw Team America! Was the puppet poo reserved for the special suckers who bought the director's cut DVD, or have I somehow managed to wipe my memory clean of ever having been exposed to such a thing? I don't much like puppets to begin with (they are somewhere between the clowns and the mimes of the inanimate kingdom, and I just don't trust them), I didn't much like Team America, and right now I'm feeling vaguely traumatized, like I just discovered I'd been roofied and made to attend a Saturday matinee against my will. What has happened here?

Oh well. The real question is not, "How the hell did you manage to get turned on by marionettes pooping poly-resin poop," but, "What are you supposed to do now?" Do I think there's a possibility that your fiancée might reconsider? I do not. As I've said every single time I get one of these wistful "do you think she'll come around?"-type questions about the world's least-popular non-obscure sex act: not on your life. I also usually suggest that anyone who has asked a partner to engage in poop play and been rebuffed should drop the issue immediately and avoid any temptation to check back later in case things might have changed in the meantime. When we're speaking of scat, no means "fuck no." It does not mean "Maybe later, if you're nice."

If shitting on your unwilling bride is truly the only thing that can turn you on anymore, you are, shall we say, S.O.L. Maybe you can still get some of your deposit money back on the space or the flowers or something, but you are not marrying this girl. I won't allow it. Before doing anything so drastic as breaking it off, however, perhaps you should look back at what brought you to this not-so-pretty pass in the first place. What happened to the hot monkey sex? If puppets are the clown-mimes of the inanimate kingdom, then monkeys are the puppets of the animal kingdom. Don't trust 'em.) What happened when you (or she) tried to address the problem? Did you ever even talk about what you've lost, or did you both just stand there and let all the juice drain away, leaving only a small, sad pile of puppet poo behind? Have you considered the fact that planning a big wedding can leech the joy out of any- and everything, and that a resurgence of libido is likely as soon as the last thank-you note is in the mail? Did you try sharing some fantasies, renting some porn, setting aside a weekend to get weird with each other? Did you try anything at all? I assure you there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in Trey Parker's philosophy.

Love, Andrea

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Continued from previous page

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Models and performers required for fashion week (Sept.
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Saddlery Gallery is accepting submissions for
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Call for submissions: Profiles Gallery looking for sculptors in Sequence. Deadline: Sat, Oct. 1 (4pm). Ph Heidi, 780-460-4310 for info.

Art instructors needed at Harcourt House Arts Centre. Call 426-4180 or e-mail: harcourt@telusplanet.net.

Call to Enter ArtsHub Studio Gallery features guest artists. Incl: Proposal; 10 slides/photos; CV; Artist statement. For info Ph Tim 423-2966.

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Eileen Mordzenki for killing the spirit, yours truly Danielle Zyp.

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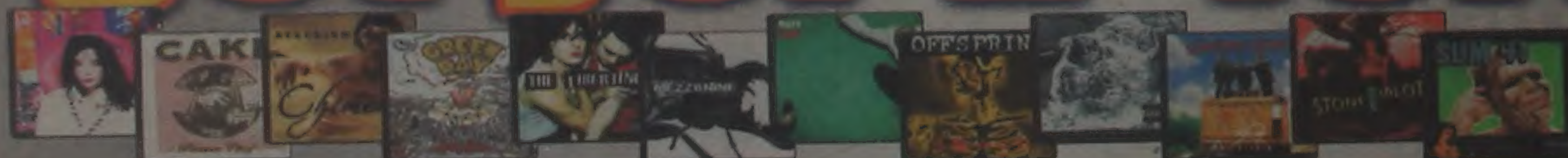
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